Encyclopaedia of Indian War of Independence

Vol. 1

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History of the Indian National Congress

From its foundation on 28 December 1885 till the time of independence of India on August 15, 1947, the Indian National Congress was the largest and most prominent Indian public organization, and central and defining influence of the Indian Independence Movement.

Although initially and primarily a political body, the Congress transformed itself into a national vehicle for social reform and human upliftment. And the Congress's foundations in democracy and multiculturalism helped make India a consistently democratic and free nation. The Congress was the strongest foundation and defining influence of modern Indian nationalism.

1885-1906

Founded upon the suggestion of British civil servant Allan Octavian Hume, the Congress was created to form a platform for civic and political dialogue of educated Indians with the British Raj. After the First War of Indian Independence and the transfer of India from the East India Company to the British Empire, it was the goal of the Raj to support and justify its governance of India with the aid of English-educated Indians, who would be familiar and friendly to British culture and political thinking.

Ironically, a few of the reasons the Congress grew and survived in the era of undisputed British hegemony, was through the patronage of British authorities, Anglo-Indians and a rising Indian educated class.

Reactions

Many Muslim community leaders, like the prominent educationalist Syed Ahmed Khan viewed the Congress negatively, owing to its membership being dominated by Hindus. Orthodox Hindu community and religious leaders were also averse, seeing the Congress as supportive of Western cultural invasion.

The ordinary people of India were not informed or concerned of its existence on the whole, for the Congress never attempted to address the issues of poverty, lack of health care, social oppression and the prejudiced negligence of the people's concerns by British authorities. The perception of bodies like the Congress was that of an elitist, educated and wealthy people's institution.

RISE OF INDIAN NATIONALISM

Lokmanya Tilak was the first to embrace *Swaraj* as the national goal. The first spurts of nationalistic sentiment that rose amongst Congress members were when the desire to be represented in the bodies of government, to have a say, a vote in the lawmaking and issues of administration of India. Congressmen saw themselves as loyalists, but wanted an active role in governing their own country, albeit as part of the Empire.

This trend was personified by Dadabhai Naoroji, considered by many as the eldest Indian statesman. Naoroji went as far as contesting, successfully, an election to the British House of Commons, becoming its first Indian member. That he was aided in his campaign by young, aspiring Indian student activists like Muhammad Ali Jinnah, describes where the imagination of the new Indian generation lay.

Bal Gangadhar Tilak was the first Indian nationalist to embrace *Swaraj* as the destiny of the nation. Tilak deeply opposed the British education system that ignored and defamed India's culture, history and values. He resented the denial of freedom of expression for nationalists, and the lack of any voice or role for ordinary Indians in the affairs of their nation. For these reasons, he considered Swaraj as the natural and only solution.

In 1906, the Congress was split into two. Tilak advocated what was deemed as *extremism*. He wanted a direct assault by the

people upon the British Raj, and the abandonment of all things British. He was backed by rising public leaders like Bipin Chandra Pal and Lala Lajpat Rai, who held the same point of view. Under them, India's three great states-Maharashtra, Bengal and Punjab region shaped the demand of the people and India's nationalism.

The moderates, led by Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Pherozeshah Mehta and Dadabhai Naoroji held firm to calls for negotiations and political dialogue. Gokhale criticized Tilak for encouraging acts of violence and disorder. But the Congress of 1906 did not have public membership, and thus Tilak and his supporters were forced to leave the party.

But with Tilak's arrest, all hopes for an Indian offensive were stalled. The Congress lost credit with the people, while Muslims were alarmed with the rise of Tilak's Hindu nationalism, and formed the All India Muslim League in 1907, considered the Congress as completely unsuitable for Indian Muslims.

WORLD WAR I: THE BATTLE FOR THE SOUL

When the British entered the British Indian Army into World War I, it provoked the first definitive, nationwide political debate of its kind in India. Voices calling for political independence grew in number.

The divided Congress re-united in the pivotal Lucknow session in 1916, with Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Gopal Krishna Gokhale adorning the stage together once again. Tilak had considerably moderated his views, and now favored political dialogue with the British. He, along with the young Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Mrs. Annie Besant launched the Home Rule Movement to put forth Indian demands for *Home Rule*-Indian participation in the affairs of their own country-a precursor to *Swaraj*. The All India Home Rule League was formed to demand dominion status within the Empire.

But another Indian man with another way was destined to lead the Congress and the Indian struggle. Mohandas Gandhi was a lawyer who had successfully led the struggle of Indians in South Africa against British discriminatory laws. Returning to India in 1916, Gandhi looked to Indian culture and history, the values and

lifestyle of its people to empower a new revolution, with the art of non-violent civil disobedience he coined *Satyagraha*.

Champaran and Kheda

Mahatma Gandhi's success in defeating the British in Champaran and Kheda gave India its first victory in the struggle for freedom. Indians gained confidence that the British would be thwarted, and millions of young people from across the country flooded into Congress membership.

The Battle for the Soul

A whole class of political leaders disagreed with Gandhi. Bipin Chandra Pal, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Annie Besant, Bal Gangadhar Tilak all criticized the idea of civil disobedience. But Gandhi had the backing of the people and a whole new generation of Indian nationalists. In a series of sessions in 1918, 1919 and 1920, where the old and the new generations clashed in famous and important debates, Gandhi and his young supporters imbued the Congress rank-and-file with passion and energy to combat British rule directly. With the tragedy of the 1919 Amritsar Massacre and the riots in Punjab, Indian anger and passions were palpable and radical. With the election of Mohandas Gandhi to the presidency of the Indian National Congress, the battle of the party's soul was won, and a new path to India's destiny forged.

Motilal Nehru, Lala Lajpat Rai and some other stalwarts backed Gandhi. Lokmanya Tilak, whom Gandhi had called *The Father of Modern India* passed on in 1920, and Gopal Krishna Gokhale had passed on four years earlier. Thus it was now entirely up to Gandhi's Congress to show the way for the nation.

THE GANDHI ERA

Expansion and Re-organization

In the years after the World War, the membership of the Congress expanded considerably, owing to public excitement after Gandhi's in Champaran and Kheda. A whole new generation of leaders arose from different parts of India, who were committed Gandhians-Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajendra Prasad, Chakravarti Rajagopalachari, Narhari Parikh, Mahadev

Desai-as well as hot-blooded nationalists aroused by Gandhi's active leadership-Chittaranjan Das, Subhas Chandra Bose, Srinivasa Iyengar.

Gandhi transformed the Congress from an elitist party based in the cities, to an organization of the people:

- Membership fees were considerably reduced.
- Congress established a large number of state units across India-known as *Pradesh Congress Committees*-based on its own configuration of India's states on basis of linguistic groups. PCCs emerged for *Maharashtra, Karnataka, Gujarat*-states that did not yet exist and were spread over hundreds of princely states outside British India.
- All former practices distinguishing Congressmen on basis of caste, ethnicity, religion and sex were eliminated-all-India unity was stressed.
- Native tongues were given official use and respect in Congress meetings-especially *Hindustani*, which was adopted for use by the All India Congress Committee.
- Leadership posts and offices at all levels would be filled by elections, not appointments. This introduction of democracy was vital in rejuvenating the party, giving voice to ordinary members as well as valuable practice for Indians in democracy.
- Eligibility for leadership would be determined by how much social work and service a member had done, not by his wealth or social standing.

Social Development

During the 1920s, M.K. Gandhi disencouraged tens of thousands of Congress volunteers to embrace a wide variety of organized tasks to address major social problems across India. Under the guidance of Congress committees and Gandhi's network of ashrams in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Tamil Nadu, the Congress attacked:

- Untouchability and caste discrimination
- Alcoholism

- Unhygienic conditions and lack of sanitation
- Lack of health care and medical aid
- Purdah and the oppression of women
- Illiteracy, with the organization of national schools and colleges
- Poverty, with proliferating khadi cloth, cottage industries

Ascendance to Power (1937-1942)

When under the Government of India Act 1935, the Congress first tasted political power, its internal organization bloomed in the diversity of political attitudes and ideologies. The focus would change slightly from the single-minded devotion to complete independence, to also entertaining excitement and theorizing about the future governance of India.

The Socialists

The *Congress Socialist Party* was formed by young Congressmen like Asoka Mehta, Jaya Prakash Narayan, Narendra Dev and others, with the support of Jawaharlal Nehru. In 1936, the Congress would adopt socialism as its goal for the future free Government of India.

The radical followers of Subhash Chandra Bose, believers in socialism and active revolution would ascend in the hierarchy with Bose's 1938 election to the Congress presidency.

The "Traditionalists"

According to one approach, the traditionalist point of view, though not in a political sense, was represented in Congressmen like Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad, C.Rajagopalachari, Purushottam Das Tandon, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Maulana Azad, who were also associates and followers of Gandhi. Their organizational strength, achieved through leading the clashes with the government, was undisputed and proven when despite winning the 1939 election, Bose resigned the Congress presidency because of the lack of confidence he enjoyed amongst national leaders. A year earlier, in the 1938 election, however, Bose had been elected with the support of Gandhi. Differences arose in 1939 on whether Bose should have a second term. Jawaharlal Nehru, who Gandhi had always preferred to Bose, had had a second term earlier. Bose's own differences centred on the place to be accorded to non-violent as against revolutionary methods. When he set up his Indian National Army in South-east Asia during the Second World War, he invoked Gandhi's name and hailed him as the Father of The Nation.

It would be wrong to suggest that the so-called traditionalist leaders looked merely to the ancient heritage of Indian, Asian or, in the case of Maulana Azad and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Islamic civilization for inspiration. They believed, along with educationists like Zakir Husain and E W Aryanayakam, that education should be imparted in a manner that enables the learners also to be able to make things with their own hands and learn skills that would make them self-supporting. This method of education was also adopted in some areas in Egypt. (See Reginald Reynolds, Beware of Africans). Zakir Husain was inpired by some European educationists and was able, with Gandhi's support, to dovetail this approach to the one favoured by the Basic Education method introduced by the Indian freedom movement. They believed that the education system, economy and social justice model for a future nation should be designed to suit the specific local requirements. While most were open to the benefits of Western influences and the socio-economic egalitarianism of socialism, they were opposed to being defined by either model.

The Final Battles

The last two most definitively important episodes in the Congress involved the final step to independence, and the division of the country on religious lines.

Quit India

Chakravarthi Rajagopalachari, the most prominent leader from Tamil Nadu resigned from the Congress to actively advocate supporting the British war effort.

Partition of India

Within the Congress, the Partition was opposed by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Saifuddin Kitchlew, Dr. Khan Sahib and Congressmen from the provinces that would inevitably become

parts of Pakistan. Maulana Azad was opposed to partition in principle, but did not wish to impede the national leadership.

1947-1952: TRANSFORMATION

Constitution

The last series of political issues that the Congress Party of the Independence era contributed to was the creation of the Constitution of India and working the Constituent Assembly of India.

In the Assembly and Constitution debates, the Congress attitude was marked by inclusiveness and liberalism. The Government appointed some prominent Indians who were Raj loyalists and liberals to important offices, and did not adopt any punitive control over the Indian civil servants who had aided the Raj in its governance of India and suppression of nationalist activities.

A Congress-dominated Assembly adopted B.R. Ambedkar, a fierce Congress critic as the chairman of the Constitution draft committee. Syama Prasad Mookerjee, a Hindu Mahasabha leader became the Minister for Industry.

The Congress stood firm on its fundamental promises and delivered a Constitution that abolished untouchability and discrimination based on caste, religion or gender. Primary education was made a right, and Congress governments made the zamindar system illegal, created minimum wages and authorized the right to strike and form labor unions.

Leadership Change

In 1947, the Congress presidency passed upon Jivatram Kripalani, a veteran Gandhian and ally of both Nehru and Patel. India's duumvirate expressed neutrality and full support to the elected winner of the 1947, 1948 and 1949 presidential races.

However, a tug of war began between Nehru and his socialist wing, and Patel and Congress traditionalists broke out in 1950's race. Nehru lobbied intensely to oppose the candidacy of Purushottam Das Tandon, whom he perceived as a Hindu revivalist with problematic views on Hindu-Muslim relations. Nehru openly backed Kripalani to oppose Tandon, but neglected courtesy to Patel upon the question. With Patel's tacit support (especially in Patel's home state of Gujarat, where due to Patel's work, Kripalani received not one vote) Tandon won a tight contest, and Nehru threatened to resign. With Patel's convincing, Nehru did not quit. However, with Patel's death in 1950, the balance shifted permanently in Nehru's favor. Kripalani, C. Rajagopalachari and Tandon were marginalized, and the Congress Party's election fortunes began depending solely on Nehru's charismatic popularity. With the 1952 election sweep, the Congress became India's main political party.

Indian National Congress-I (also known as the Congress Party and abbreviated INC) is a major political party in India. Created in 1885 by Allan Octavian Hume, Dadabhai Naoroji and Sir Dinshaw Edulji Wacha, the Indian National Congress became the nation's leader in the Independence Movement, with over 15 million Indians involved in its organizations and over 70 million participants in its struggle against the British Empire. After independence in 1947, it became the nation's dominant political party, only challenged for leadership in more recent decades. In the 14th Lok Sabha (2004-2009), 145 members (out of 545), the largest contingent amongst all parties, serve in the house. The party is currently the chief member of the ruling United Progressive Alliance coalition. It is the only party to get more than 100 million votes in the past 2 general elections (1999, 2004)[1].

The party's reputaion has been marred by allegations of sychophancy towards Nehru's progenies by its senior leaders such as Pranab Mukherjee.

HISTORY

The history of the Indian National Congress falls into two distinct eras:

- The pre-independence era, when the party was at the forefront of the struggle for independence;
- The post-independence era, when the party has enjoyed a prominent place in Indian politics, ruling the country for 48 of the 60 years since independence in 1947.

The Pre-independence Era

Founded in 1885 with the objective of obtaining a greater share in government for educated Indians, the Indian National Congress was initially not opposed to British rule. The Congress met once a year during December. Indeed, it was a Scotsman, Allan Octavian Hume, who brought about its first meeting in Bombay, with the approval of Lord Dufferin, the then-Viceroy.

Womesh Chandra Bonerjee was the first President of the INC. The first meeting was scheduled to be held in Pune, but due to a plague outbreak there, the meeting was later shifted to Bombay. The first Session of INC was held from 28-31 December 1885, and was attended by 72 delegates.

A few years down the line, the demands of INC became more radical in the face of constant opposition from the government, and the party became very active in the independence movement. By 1907 the party was split into two halves: the *Garam Dal* of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, or Extremists (literally "hot faction"), and the *Naram Dal* of Gopal Krishna Gokhale, or Moderates (literally "soft faction"), distinguished by their attitude towards the British. Under the influence of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, the Congress became the first integrated mass organization in the country, bringing together millions of people against the British.

In its time as the nation's leader in the freedom struggle, it produced the nation's greatest leaders. Before the Gandhi Era came leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, Lala Lajpat Rai, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Mohammed Ali Jinnah (later leader of the Muslim League and instrumental in the creation of Pakistan), all starting with the first legendary icon of Indians: Dadabhai Naoroji, the president of the sister Indian National Association and later the first Indian Member of Parliament in the British House of Commons.

With the rise of Mahatma Gandhi's popularity and his Satyagraha art of revolution came Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru (the nation's first Prime Minister), Dr. Rajendra Prasad (the nation's first President), Khan Mohammad Abbas Khan, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Chakravarti Rajgopalachari, Jivatram Kripalani and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. With the

already existing nationalistic feeling combinded with Gandhi's popularity the Congress became a forceful mass organization in the country, bringing together millions of people by specifically working against caste differences, untouchability, poverty, and religious and ethnic boundaries. Although predominantly Hindu, it had members from virtually every religion, ethnic group, economic class and linguistic group. At the time of the Quit India movement, the Congress was undoubtedly the strongest political and revolutionary organization in India. The Indian National Congress could claim to be the true representative of the Indian people.

The 1929 Lahore session under the presidency of Jawaharlal Nehru holds special significance as in this session "Poorna Swaraj" (complete independence) was declared as the goal of INC. The 26th January 1930 was declared as "Poorna Swaraj Diwas," Independence Day although the British remained in India a number of years longer. It was to commemorate this date particularly that The Indian Constitution was formally adopted on 26 January 1950 (even though it was passed on 26 November 1949).

After the First World War the party became associated with Mahatma Gandhi, who remained its unofficial, spiritual leader and mass icon even as younger men and women became party president. The party was in many ways an umbrella organization, sheltering within itself radical socialists, traditionalists and even Hindu and Muslim conservatives.

The Post-independence Era

The party remained in power for thirty *continuous* years between independence in 1947 and its first taste of electoral defeat (at the national level) in 1977.

Jawaharlal Nehru

Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Patel are said to have held the view that the INC was formed only for achieving independence and should have been disbanded in 1947.[1] However, at the time of independence, the INC (led by Jawaharlal Nehru) was a major political organization in the country, and was established as the major political party. The Congress thus, considering the perceived

need for a stable leadership and guiding vision after the terrible chaos and confusion following the Partition of India and Independence, was re-established as an electoral party in independent India. Across several general elections, the party ruled uninterrupted until 1977, and has remained a major political force.

After the murder of Gandhi in 1948 222 and the death of Sardar Patel in 1950, Jawaharlal Nehru was the sole remaining iconic national leader, and soon the situation became so that Nehru was key to the political potency and future of the Congress. Nehru embraced secularism, socialist economic policies and a non-aligned foreign policy, which became the hallmark of the modern Congress Party. Nehru's policies challenged the landed class, the business class and improved the position of religious minorities and lower caste Hindus. A generation of freedom fighting leaders were soon replaced by a generation of people who had grown up in the shadow of Nehru. Nehru led the Congress Party to consecutively majorities in the elections of 1952, 1957 and 1962.

After Nehru's death in 1964,333 the party's future first came into question. No leader was competitive enough to touch Nehru's iconic status, so the second-stage leadership mustered around the compromise candidate, the gentle, soft-spoken and Nehruvian Lal Bahadur Shastri. Shastri remained Prime Minister till his own death in 1966, and a broad Congress Party election opted for Indira Gandhi, Nehru's daughter, over the right-wing, conservative Morarji Desai.

In 1955 in Awadi session the party adopted a socialistic pattern of society for India.

Indira Gandhi

The first serious challenge to Congress hegemony came in 1967 when a united opposition, under the banner of Samyukt Vidhayak Dal, won control over several states in the Hindi belt. Indira Gandhi, the daughter of Nehru, and Congress president, was then challenged by the majority of the party leadership. The conflict led to a split, and Indira launched a separate INC. Initially this party was known as Congress (R), but it soon came to be

generally known as the *New Congress*. The official party became known as Indian National Congress (Organisation) led by Kamaraj. It was informally called the *Old Congress*. As Indira Priyadarshini had control over the state machinery, her faction was recognized as the "real" INC by the Election Commission of India, although her organization was the break-away group.

The split can in some ways be seen as a left-wing/right-wing division. Indira Gandhi wanted to use a populist agenda in order to mobilise popular support for the party. She raised slogans such as *Garibi Hatao* (Remove Poverty), and wanted to develop closer ties with the Soviet Union. The regional party elites, who formed the INC(O), stood for a more conservative agenda, and distrusted Soviet help. INC(O) later merged into the Janata Party.

Gradually, Indira Gandhi grew more and more authoritarian. Following allegations of widespread rigging in the general elections, a court overturned Indira Gandhi's victory in the Parliamentary constituency. Facing growing opposition she proclaimed a state of National emergency in 1975, curtailed the powers of the courts, and unleashed a police state.

After she lifted the emergency in 1977, more Congress factions were formed, the one remaining loyal to Indira Gandhi being popularly known as Congress(I) with an 'I' for Indira. The Congress (I) was routed in the general elections by the Janata Party, but the coalition government fell apart in two years. The Congress party returned to power in the ensuing 1980 elections. In 1984 Indira Gandhi was assassinated by two of her Sikh bodyguards, as a revenge for Operation Blue Star. In the following days more than 6 thousands of Sikhs were killed in the 1984 riots, mainly in Delhi, by activists and leaders of the Congress Party. .

About the riots, the new PM and Indira's son, Rajiv Gandhi had infamously remarked, "When a big tree falls, the earth is bound to shake."

The Post-Indira Era

After Indira, her son Rajiv Gandhi, took over as Congress leader and led the party to victory with a large majority in the 1984 Lok Sabha elections. It governed from 1984-9 and then was defeated in the 1989 general election. Rajiv Gandhi was also

assassinated by the LTTE during the course of the election campaign in 1991. Following Rajiv Gandhi's assassination, P.V. Narasimha Rao succeeded him as Congress leader and became prime minister.

The 1990s was a period of prolonged crisis for the Congress. After gradually losing political influence the party asked the Rajiv Gandhi's widow, Sonia, to accept the position of Congress President. She refused at the time, and the Congress stuck with Narasimha Rao.

Rao dramatically changed the party's traditionally socialist policies and introduced major economic reforms and liberalization, with the help of then Finance minister (and future Prime Minister) Manmohan Singh. Nonetheless, his involvement in the bribery of members of parliament was a major issue which led to the downfall of the Congress in 1996, and subsequently his own disgraced exit from politics.

Former treasurer Sitaram Kesri took over the reins of the party and oversaw the Congress support to the United Front governments that ran from 1996-1998. During his tenure, several key leaders broke away from the party, and serious infighting broke out among those left. In 1998, Sonia Gandhi finally accepted the post of Congress President, in a move that may have saved the party from extinction.

After her election as party leader, a section of the party, which objected to the choice, broke away and formed the Nationalist Congress Party. The use of "Congress (I)" continues to denote the party run by Indira Gandhi's successors. There have been repeated attempts by the Indian nationalist groups (such as the BJP) to discredit Sonia Gandhi's leadership on the basis of her foreign origin-she is Italian-born.

Although the Congress expedited the downfall of the NDA government in 1999 by promising an alternative, Ms. Gandhi's decision was followed by fresh elections and the Congress party's worst-ever tally in the lower house. The party spent the interval period forging alliances and overseeing changes in the state and central organizations to revive the party. It has had many electoral successes which led up to the formation of a Congress-led government in 2004.

Indian Prime Ministers from the Congress Party

- Jawaharlal Nehru (1947-1964)
- Gulzarilal Nanda (May-June1964, January 1966)
- Lal Bahadur Shastri (1964-1966)
- Indira Gandhi (1966-1977, 1980-1984)
- Rajiv Gandhi (1984-1989)
- P.V. Narasimha Rao (1991-1996)
- Manmohan Singh (2004)

Political Accusations

Since the party has dominated the political landscape of India for over a century, there are many charges of corruption and similar charges against it. Some examples are:

- Anti-Sikh riots-After the assassination of Indira Gandhi by Sikh Body Guards following Operation Bluestar, many Congress workers prominently including Jagdish Tytler and Sajjan Kumar were accused of inciting and participating in anti-Sikh riots that killed thousands. The Congress apologised many years later for its silence on these events, an apology that was considered inadequate by some of those concerned.
- Volcker report-The Independent Inquiry Committee (IIC) appointed by the United Nations in its final report released on October 27, 2005 confirms that documents state: 'Beneficiary: India: Congress Party' with an entitlement of 4 million barrels of crude' and `Beneficiary: India: Singh Mr K. Natwar' with an entitlement of 4 million barrels'.
- The opposition Bharatiya Janata Party has repeatedly accused the Congress of showing unnatural favouritism to the Indian Muslim community and the toleration, or even promotion of Islamic and obscurantism. It has been also accused of deliberately fragmenting Hindus while consolidating conservative Muslim votes (by allowing them a separate personal code, etc) Congress policy is also accused of causing fifty years of economic stagnation, following Independence, and of excessive veneration of the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty.

Internal Organization

The organization developed by Mahatma Gandhi's reorganization of the Congress in the years of 1918 to 1920 has largely been retained till today.

In every Indian state and union territory or *pradesh*, there is a Pradesh Congress Committee, which is the provincial unit of the party, responsible for directing political campaigns at local and state levels and assisting the campaigns for Parliamentary constituencies. Each PCC has a Working Committee of 10-15 key members, and the state president is the leader of the state unit. The Congressmen elected as members of the states legislative assemblies form the Congress Legislature Parties in the various state assemblies, and their chairperson is usually the party's nominee for Chief Ministership.

The All India Congress Committee is formed of delegates sent from the PCCs around the country. The delegates elect various Congress committees, including the Congress Working Committee, which consists of senior party leaders and office bearers, and takes all important executive and political decisions.

The President of the Indian National Congress is in effect the party's national leader, head of the organization, head of the Working Committee and all chief Congress committees, chief spokesman and the Congress choice to become the Prime Minister of India.

Constitutionally, the president is to be elected by the vote of the PCCs and members of the AICC. However, this procedure has often been by-passed by the Working Committee, choosing to elect its own candidate as an emergency measure.

The Congress Parliamentary Party is the group of elected MPs in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.

Congress in Various States

Congress is currently in power in five states (Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Delhi, Haryana and Manipur) where the party enjoys a majority of its own. In five other states — Assam, Goa, Jammu and Kashmir, Maharashtra and Pondicherry — it has shared the spoils of power with other alliance partners. In the remaining states and union territories, with the exception of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, various opposition parties or blocks are in power.

List of Congress Chief Ministers

Vilasrao Deshmukh-Maharashtra

Ghulam Nabi Azad-Jammu and Kashmir

Yeduguri Sandinti Rajasekhara Reddy-Andhra Pradesh

Tarun Gogoi-Assam

Dorjee Khandu-Arunachal Pradesh

Sheila Dikshit-Delhi

Digambar Kamat-Goa

Bhupinder Singh Hooda-Haryana

Okram Ibobi Singh-Manipur

N. Rangaswamy-Pondicherry

List of presidents of the Party

Name of President	Life Span	Year of Presidency	Place of Conference
Womesh Chandra Bonnerjee	December 29, 1844-1906	1885	Bombay
Dadabhai Naoroji	Sept. 4, 1825-1917	1886	Calcutta
Badaruddin Taiyabji	Oct. 10, 1844-1906	1887	Madras
George Yule	1829-1892	1888	Allahabad
Sir William Wedderburn	1838-1918	1889	Bombay
Sir Pherozeshah Mehta	Aug. 4, 1845-1915	1890	Calcutta
P. Ananda Charlappa	Aug. 1843-1908	1891	Nagpur
Womesh Chandra Bonnerjee	Dec. 29, 1844-1906	1892	Allahabad
Dadabhai Naoroji	Sept. 4, 1848-1925	1893	Lahore
Alfred Webb	1834-1908	1894	Madras
Surendranath Banerjea	Nov. 10, 1848-1925	1895	Poona
Rahimtulla M. Sayani	April 5, 1847-1902	1896	Calcutta
Sir C. Sankaran Nair	July 11, 1857-1934	1897	Amraoti

Ananda Mohan Bose	Sept. 23, 1847-1906	1898	Madras
Romesh Chunder Dutt	Aug. 13, 1848-1909	1899	Lucknow
Sir Narayan Ganesh Chandavarkar	Dec. 2, 1855-1923	1900	Lahore
Sir Dinshaw Edulji Wacha	Aug. 2, 1844-1936	1901	Calcutta
Surendranath Banerjea	Nov. 10, 1825-1917	1902	Ahmedabad
Lalmohan Ghosh	1848-1909	1903	Madras
Sir Henry Cotton	1845-1915	1904	Mumbai
Gopal Krishna Gokhale	May 9, 1866-1915	1905	Benares
Dadabhai Naoroji	Sept. 4, 1825-1917	1906	Calcutta
Rashbihari Ghosh	Dec. 23, 1845-1921	1907	Surat
Rashbihari Ghosh	Dec. 23, 1845-1921	1908	Madras
Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya	Dec. 25, 1861-1946	1909	Lahore
Sir William Wedderburn	1838-1918	1910	Allahabad
Pandit Bishan Narayan Dar	1864-1916	1911	Calcutta
Rao Bahadur Raghunath Narasinha Mudholkar	1857-1921	1912	Bankipur
Nawab Syed Muhammad Bahadur	?-1919	1913	Karachi
Bhupendra Nath Bose	1859-1924	1914	Madras
Lord Satyendra Prasanna Sinha	March 1863-1928	1915	Mumbai
Ambica Charan Mazumdar	1850-1922	1916	Lucknow
Annie Besant	Oct. 1, 1847-1933	1917	Calcutta
Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya	Dec. 25, 1861-1946	1918	Delhi
Syed Hasan Imam	Aug. 31, 1871-1933	1918	Mumbai (Special Session)
Pandit Motilal Nehru	May 6, 1861- February 6, 1931	1919	Amritsar
Lala Lajpat Rai	January 28, 1865- Nov. 17, 1928	1920	Calcutta (Special Session)

C. Vijayaraghavachariar Ismail	1852-April 19, 1944	1920	Nagpur
Hakim Ajmal Khan	1863-Dec. 29, 1927	1921	Ahmedabad
Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das	Nov. 5, 1870- June 16, 1925	1922	Gaya
Maulana Mohammad Ali	Dec. 10, 1878- Jan. 4, 1931	1923	Kakinada
Maulana Abul Kalam Azad	1888-Feb. 22, 1958	1923	Delhi (Special Session)
Mahatma Gandhi	October 2, 1869- January 30, 1948	1924	Belgaum
Sarojini Naidu	February 13, 1879- March 2, 1949	1925	Kanpur
S. Srinivasa Iyengar	September 11, 1874- May 19, 1941	1926	Gauhati
Dr. M A Ansari	December 25, 1880- May 10, 1936	1927	Madras
Pandit Motilal Nehru	May 6, 1861- February 6, 1931	1928	Calcutta
Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru	November 14, 1889- May 27, 1964	1929 & 30	Lahore
Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel	October 31, 1875- December 15, 1950	1931	Karachi
Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya	Dec. 25, 1861-1946	1932	Delhi
Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya	Dec. 25, 1861-1946	1933	Calcutta
Nellie Sengupta	1886-1973	1933	Calcutta
Dr. Rajendra Prasad	December 3, 1884- February 28, 1963	1934 & 35	Mumbai
Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru	November 14, 1889- May 27, 1964	1936	Lucknow
Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru	November 14, 1889- May 27, 1964	1936& 37	Faizpur
Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose	January 23, 1897- August 18, 1945?	1938	Haripura

Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose	January 23, 1897- August 18, 1945?	1939	Tripuri
Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Ramgarh	1888-February 22, 1958		1940-46
Acharya J.B. Kripalani	1888-March 19, 1982	1947	Delhi
Dr Pattabhi Sitaraimayya	December 24, 1880- December 17, 1959	1948 & 49	Jaipur
Purushottam Das Tandon	August 1, 1882- July 1, 1961	1950	Nasik
Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru	November 14, 1889- May 27, 1964	1951 & 52	New Delhi
Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru	November 14, 1889- May 27, 1964	1953	Hyderabad
Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru	November 14, 1889- May 27, 1964	1954	Calcutta
U N Dhebar	Sept. 21, 1905-1977	1955	Avadi
U N Dhebar	Sept. 21, 1905-1977	1956	Amritsar
U N Dhebar	Sept. 21, 1905-1977	1957	Indore
U N Dhebar	Sept. 21, 1905-1977	1958	Gauhati
U N Dhebar	Sept. 21, 1905-1977	1959	Nagpur
Indira Gandhi	November 19, 1917- October 31, 1984	1959	New Delhi
Neelam Sanjiva Reddy	May 19, 1913- June 1, 1996	1960	Bangalore
Neelam Sanjiva Reddy	May 19, 1913- June 1, 1996	1961	Bhavnagar
Neelam Sanjiva Reddy	May 19, 1913- June 1, 1996	1962 & 63	Patna
K. Kamaraj	July 15, 1903- October 2, 1975	1964	Bhubaneswar
K. Kamaraj	July 15, 1903- October 2, 1975	1965	Durgapur
K. Kamaraj	July 15, 1903- October 2, 1975	1966 & 67	Jaipur

S. Nijalingappa	December 10, 1902- August 9, 2000	1968	Hyderabad
S. Nijalingappa	December 10, 1902- August 9, 2000	1969	Faridabad
Jagjivan Ram	April 5, 1908- July 6, 1986	1970 & 71	Mumbai
Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma	August 19, 1918- December 26, 1999	1972-74	Calcutta
Dev Kant Baruah	Feb. 22, 1914-1996	1975-77	Chandigarh
Indira Gandhi	November 19, 1917- October 31, 1984	1978-83	New Delhi
Indira Gandhi	November 19, 1917- October 31, 1984	1983-84	Calcutta
Rajiv Gandhi	August 20, 1944- May 21, 1991	1985-91	Mumbai
P. V. Narasimha Rao	June 28, 1921- December 23, 2004	1992-96	Tirupati
Sitaram Kesri	November 1919- October 24, 2000	1997-98	Calcutta
Sonia Gandhi	December 9, 1946-	1998-present	

2

The Formation of the Indian National Congress

The Indian National Congress is the self-proclaimed largest and oldest democratic organization in the world. Since its inception in 1885, it has been responsible for many of the drastic changes in Indian politics. So much so that leaders like Mahatma Gandhi who rose out of it succeeded in not only seeing changes in their country but in the entire world.

RETURN TO THE "INDIA UNDER BRITISH RULE" CHRONOLOGY

Since the 1600's Britain had been a major force in India. The East India Company and the British government developed almost complete economic and political control. It wasn't until the Sepoy Rebellion of 1857 that the British government took direct control. The extension of direct British control actually increased Indian control in their country. Existing Indian royalty were given extended ruling powers as long as they stayed faithful to the queen. The majority of the people however were ruled by the Indian Civil service which had almost no representation from the Indian people.

It wasn't until 1880 that local representative institutions were established. These institutions allowed tax paying citizens to elect officials who were responsible for areas such as public works, education and health care. In 1892 the Indian Councils Act allowed the first Indians to move into positions of national power. However, most of the real positions of power were not available

to Indians because the tests required for qualification were given only in Britain. The people were quickly becoming more and more dissatisfied with the limited concessions of the British rule due in part to a rise in Indian nationalism. More Indians were receiving quality educations and taking pride in their heritage. The "rediscovery" of Buddhism as well as many other Sanskrit writings and philosophies were giving the people a sense of national history.

These circumstances and the compromise over the Ilbert Bill of 1883 began to force more changes. Indian officials hoped to pass this bill and make Europeans living in India answerable to some of the Indian ruled courts. A compromise was reached which neither party was happy with and prodded the Indians to do something more. Their answer was the Indian National Congress which convened for the first time in 1885. It started as a moderate group of mostly middle class Indians but soon developed into much more. A national dialogue was created for the issues facing the people of India and a representative and democratic body was soon formed. This group drew the attention of the whole country and received half-hearted support from the British government. In 1905, controversy over the partition of Bengal sparked the group to become more radical. They promoted the *swadeshi* movement (the purchase and use of Indian made products and resources and boycott of foreign products) and mass protests. These movements were a precursor to the eventual rise of Mahatma Gandhi and India's eventual independence.

SOCIALISM AND NATIONALISM

Socialists had reason to hope that their cause would triumph as opposition to the war mounted in Europe and as soldiers or sailors on both sides mutinied. Even sceptics might be silenced by the 'seeming miracle', as Bunting called it, of the Russian upheaval. It far outstripped the wildest dreams of socialists themselves, who 'never hoped for so early a fruition of their movement'. 'This is a bourgeois revolution, but arriving when the night of capitalism is far spent', wrote Jones in March 1917, 'It cannot be a mere repetition of previous revolutions. It partakes infinitely more of a victory for the proletariat, as well as for the

industrial capitalist.' With surprising insight, considering South Africa's isolation, Jones recognized that Russia was heading for a revolution 'by the side of which this and all previous ones are but "shopkeepers' riots" in immensity'. The Russian 'elemental mass' was about to enter 'the International class struggle for human emancipation. The day of its coming seems immeasurably nearer by this awakening.

Enthusiasm kept pace with the spread of soviets, the councils of workmen and soldiers, in Russia. She of all countries, ' clear-sighted, audacious, unfaltering, with magnificent contempt for the bogies and fetishes that capitalism would have us dread or revere, has suited the action to the word', wrote Bunting in June. His election manifesto of that month urged South Africans 'to rise to the occasion' by 'following the bold and inspiring lead of the Russian Workers '. When the revolution moved to its climax in the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks in November the *International* declared that they had incarnated the theories of Karl Marx. 'The Word becomes Flesh in the Council of Workmen.'

Two hundred socialists from the Reef, Pretoria, Durban, Kimberley and Cape Town met in the Johannesburg Trades Hall in August to send Andrews to the proposed peace conference in Stockholm. It was a great occasion. Among the main speakers were Sigamoney, of Durban's Indian Workers' Union, and Selope Thema, secretary of the African National Congress. A number of Africans attended. Outraged by this breach of the racial taboo, the Labour party's executive, then meeting in the same building, adjourned to a near-by hotel in protest against whites and Africans sitting together in conference. Unperturbed by this protest, the socialists passed a resolution moved by Dunbar instructing their delegate to demand peace 'on the basis of the complete destruction of the capitalist system'. This was ' mere demagogy ' noted Andrews at a later period. ' Dunbar and his supporters were more revolutionary than Lenin and the Bolsheviks.'

Andrews sailed in August to represent the ISL, the Cape SDF, the Jewish Socialist Society in Cape Town, the S.A. Peace and Arbitration Society in Cape Town, the Indian Workers' Union in Durban, the Native Workers' Union in Johannesburg, and Kimberley Socialists. He took with him a report ' on the state of

the working-class movement in South Africa, and the state of the " minority " socialist movement and its origin through cleavages on the war question'. The report also challenged Creswell's status and claims to represent the labour movement at the allied socialist conference in London. For the white working class shared to a great extent 'the illusion of all white master communities, Athenian democracies, that they represent the whole of the people and that the mass of the serfs or slaves beneath are politically non-existent.'

It was an optimistic report. The League, it claimed, had survived constant persecution for its stand against war and racism, and was now the only vigorous political organization of the working classes. The Labour party might win elections, but these were no test of real power. The League's fight against racism had far greater world-wide significance and was making headway also among white workers. Ten of the thirteen members of the League's executive committee were wage earners and staunch supporters of trade unionism without colour bars. The great bulk of Africans had not yet acquired a class consciousness, but the League was breaking through the barriers by means of propaganda and trade union organization. 'It would be hard for our European comrades to realize the significance of Indian and Native delegates sitting in a working-class gathering in South Africa. The very fact of these black fellow workers voicing their class consciousness with us lifted the Conference to a high pitch of enthusiasm.' Though not representative of the great masses, they were ' the advance guard of that mass in its struggle towards articulation'. The League's propaganda and its first fruits were of ' mighty significance for the millions of the coloured proletariat in all parts of the world, and a surety that they too will unitedly tread the path of the working class International '.

One of the first fruits was the Durban Indian Workers' Industrial Union. Gordon Lee, a follower of De Leon, took the initiative in forming it along the lines of the IWW. ' Some croakers here, Socialist and Labour,' he reported, ' say we cannot organize the coolies.' Yet he recruited in less than six months an appreciable following of printing, tobacco, laundry and dock workers. The 'common Indian worker' was realizing at last that Indian capitalists were as much his enemy as any white boss. Miners, municipal

workers and the 'sugar slaves' stretched out their hands for aid, and the union would soon be able to stand alone under its own elected leaders. B. L. Sigomoney took over from Lee and soon became prominent in left-wing circles. He was elected the vice-chairman of a socialist conference held at Durban in October 1917 to debate the rival merits of 'pure' industrial action and parliamentary politics. In January 1918 he represented his union at the ISLs annual conference in Johannesburg. This, too, was a memorable occasion. Never before had the League included among its delegates a member of the darker races; and it rejoiced at having made great ideological progress towards non-racial labour solidarity.

'Organize and educate' produced better results when applied to Africans than to whites, discovered Charles Dones, a miner and member of the League's management committee. This was said in August after he had addressed the first of a series of classes on the labour movement held in the Johannesburg Trades Hall for Africans. Asked what they wanted, they replied *Sifuna zonke*'-everything! 'What White Union,' remarked Bunting, 'ever aimed so high or so true?' From the classes emerged later in the year the Industrial Workers Union of Africa, one of the first African trade unions, described by communists in later years as 'an "all-in" Industrial trade union, with the idea of roping in the Native and other unorganized Non-European workers'. In 1918, however, when Bunting and others stood trial on a charge of inciting Africans to strike, the organizers minimized the union's role and said that it was no more than 'a little body of native students of socialism'.9 At least five of the students were police informers and detectives. One of them, Wilfrid Njobe, had become the union's secretary; another, R. Moorosi, had been elected to the committee and represented it at a meeting with the AP0. When warned that spies were present, Bunting assured the members that they had nothing to fear from the police.

Police and press kept a watchful eye on the League; and F. S. Malan, the minister of mines, hurled threats at the 'agitators' who ' played with fire ' by inciting Africans to strike. Undaunted, the African National Congress called on its people to support the IWA and make it strong, for it could teach employers that workers

wanted higher wages. The prime minister, Louis Botha, told a deputation from the Transvaal ANC to steer clear of international socialists. S. M. Makgatho, the provincial president, replied that Congress had decided on its own to call a strike against the Native Administration Bill. The Labour right wing, joining in the red-baiting, closed the Trades Hall to the League's non-racial gatherings. Bunting showed his disapproval by resigning as honorary secretary of the hall's management committee, which then gave the League notice to vacate its offices. Crawford, more tolerant, invited Talbot Williams, a leader of the Transvaal APO and organizer of the IWA, to address the Industrial Federation's annual conference in December. The federation refused to admit Coloured delegates from the Cape. Williams then declined to speak at a 'Pure White Labour Congress'; and delivered his address instead before a large audience of Africans and Coloured in Johannesburg on 9 January 1918.

'We who have never enjoyed our just rights, either in the labour market or politically,' he said, 'have but one weapon and that is the organization of black labour, upon which the whole commercial and mining industry rests today.' This was the only way of bringing white trade unionists to their senses. Their great grievance against the black man was that he sold his labour cheaply. Yet they worked at the sewerage plant for 5s. a day, were hired as railway porters at 6s. 6d. and went on strike at the Van Ryn mine because they wanted white men to be given the jobs of Coloured waste packers at a rate of 7s. a day. Trade unionists who refused to work ' within five yards of clean respectable intelligent Coloured men at a skilled trade', willingly worked 'side by side with a raw blanketed native' so long as he was a subordinate at their beck and call. They would rather dine and wine with mine owners than combine with their darker fellow workers. Servile, afraid of competition and prejudiced, the white man was a supervisor of labour and not a genuine worker. ' The true worker, the backbone of labour in this country, is the brown and the black man, who are now organizing against this federation of rotters.'

Bunting, no less optimistic, reported that 'the different races of workers of this country, whites, coloured, natives, Indians, are

rapidly coming together to form one great Industrial Workers' Union of Africa.'11 The desired unity never took shape. Even Williams found it expedient, against the advice of the socialists, to organize Africans and Coloured in separate unions under a joint executive. White workers, with few exceptions, rejected the vision of 'proletarian freedom', but not because of any servility such as Williams alleged. They were in a strong bargaining position and exploited the advantages of a growing industrialism that outstripped the supply of skilled labour. Strikes in 1917 resulted in wage increases or a shorter working week for printers in Johannesburg, tailors, bakers and hairdressers in Cape Town, and men employed on the diamond mines. Policemen who struck work in Cape Town in January 1918 were less successful, and received only a suspended sentence for refusing duty. The socialists hailed them as young Afrikaners with a great revolutionary potential; and accused Crawford of leading white workers away from an alliance with Africans into a policy of collaboration with employers.

Even the former international socialist, Forrester Brown, the secretary of the miners' union and president of the SAIE', had turned reactionary 'under the baleful influence of Crawford, the apostle of Brother Capital and Brother Labour'. The white workers backed the Chamber of Mines in its efforts to sidetrack the inevitable revolution by keeping natives in subjection and throwing sops to whites.12 Crawford presented a list of fifteen demands to the Chamber in July 1918 on behalf of five unions. They asked, among other things, for the dismissal of seventy-four Coloured drill sharpeners, the cancellation of a wage freeze clause adopted in 1916, an increase in the mechanics' pay to 8 2s. a week, a closed shop agreement and a paid holiday on 1 May. The Chamber agreed to maintain the prevailing practice for the employment of Coloured on the mines, introduced an improved war bonus scheme, and donated 10,000 to the Federation's cooperative stores instituted by Crawford to combat the rise in prices.

Africans, who suffered most from the steep rise in prices, received neither a cost of living allowance nor an increase in wages. The slightest display of militancy on their part evoked a violent reaction. When African miners on the East Rand boycotted concession stores in February 1918, the police arrested the pickets and broke the boycott. Botha used the occasion to lecture parliament on the evils of African trade unionism and the disastrous consequences that might follow from the activities of white men who 'were going to the native kraals urging them to combine'. The capitalist press was both more ferocious and less accurate. It printed extracts from Talbot Williams's address blamed the boycott on 'ill-balanced and fanatical Socialists of the baser sort', and detected the sinister influence of the 'IWW', which was 'notoriously financed by Germany'. The socialists of the ISL denied having had anything to do with the boycott. Indeed they regarded it as a 'misguided tactic', an attack on the branch rather than the root. Their only contribution, they said, was to collaborate with the Industrial Workers Union of Africa in compiling a leaflet in Sesutu and Zulu. It was the first serious attempt to put Marx's clarion call for unity into an African language: 'Let there be no longer any talk of Basuto, Zulu or Shangaan. You are all labourers. Let Labour be your common bond. Deliver yourself from the chains of capitalism.'

A few months later the socialists faced more serious charges in consequence of an African strike wave on the Rand. White mechanics employed at the municipal power station came out on strike in May for 8. 2s. a week, the equivalent, they claimed, of their pre-war wage of 6. They won their demand after leaving the town in darkness for several nights. Impressed at the success of this operation, Africans working in the municipal sanitary services asked for a modest rise from 1s. 8d. to 2s. 6d. a day. But they were black and handled lavatory buckets, not electric generators. The council refused, some fifty men struck work, and all except fifteen were convicted. Another 152 men then came out, initially in protest against having to do the work of the arrested strikers. T. G. Macfie, the chief magistrate and a staunch ally of Crawford, sentenced the 152 strikers on 12 June to two months' hard labour for breach of contract. They would be compelled to do the same work as before, he told them, without pay and under armed guard. They would be shot if they tried to escape and flogged if they refused to work. The harsh threats and the contrast between this treatment and the concessions made to the white strikers infuriated the African

public. The ANC launched a campaign for the prisoners' release which soon developed into a demand for a general wage increase of 1s. a day, to be enforced if necessary by a general strike on 1 July.

Socialists and ANC leaders disapproved. Makgatho warned a meeting of nearly 2,000 Africans that striking was dangerous. Even socialists, being white, would join in shooting down Africans. The League retorted that it could have no part in the ' more reactionary, middle-class and religious-cum-racial tendencies 'of Congress, though' the close coincidence of native and working-class interests ' might yet force it to play a useful role. T. P. Tinker, the League's secretary, told Africans that they were too badly organized to succeed in a strike which was bound to give the enemy an excuse for violence. The ISL claimed that its job was to 'agitate, educate, organize', and not to instigate strikes. Ninety per cent of the workers were ' still sunk in ignorance and servility'. Much work would have to be done before white and black workers could bring off really effective industrial action.

Macfie urged the SAIF to organize a defence force to protect women and property against the expected strike. Crawford and Forrester Brown agreed and offered to raise workers' battalions. The whites, commented Bunting, assumed that it was their duty to shoot down helots at the smallest sign of discontent; ' and one of the darkest episodes in the history of South Africa Labour is the attempted enlistment of white trade unionists in the Defence Force for the avowed purpose of so shooting them down'. The daily press, the Bishop of Pretoria, and the Native Recruiting Corporation took fright and joined Africans in condemning Macfie's judgement. To relieve tension the government ordered the release of the strikers, whose sentences were hurriedly suspended by the Supreme Court on 28 June. Botha interviewed an African deputation led by Saul Msane and promised to investigate their grievances.

The strike was called off, but 15,000 men employed at three mines refused to work on 1 July. Police and troops rushed to the compounds and drove the men down the shafts after serious clashes at Ferreira mine and the Robinson Deep, where they fought back with pickhandles, jumpers,* axes and iron pipes. The

grievances commissioner, J. B. Moffat, chief magistrate of the Transkei, accepted Msane's diagnosis. ' The whole trouble in the compounds is due to the colour bar. A native may know his work very well, but on account of his colour he cannot obtain advancement.' If those who possessed the necessary qualifications could obtain better pay, ' it would encourage them to improve in their work and would bring about peace and satisfaction.'

The police arrived at a different diagnosis. They prosecuted Bunting, Tinker and Hanscombe of the League, together with five Africans-D. S. Letanka, vice-president of the Transvaal Congress; L. T. Mvabaza, a director of *Abantu Batho*; and J. Ngojo, H. Kraai and A. Cetyiwe, three members of the IWA, For 'the first time in South Africa', noted T. D. M. Skota, author of the *Black Folks' Who's Who*, 'members of the European and Native races, in common cause united, were arrested and charged together because of their political activities.' The accused disclaimed direct responsibility for the strikes. The League, said Bunting, preached socialism and industrial unionism, and approved of strikes only when preceded by sound trade union organization. 'If any public organization called a strike,' he added, 'it was not the ISL but the Native Congress, with which the Socialists are at arm's length.' The prosecution's case collapsed after its chief witness Luke Massina, a government informer, had admitted in cross-examination to having given perjured evidence. The attorney-general declined to indict the accused before the Supreme Court.

Moffat commented caustically on the League's claim to have done no more than educate and organize Africans for industrial unionism. This was like 'teaching children to play with matches round an open barrel of gunpowder'. Socialist propaganda would make a catastrophe inevitable if reasonable grounds of complaint were not removed. Low wages were not, however, a legitimate grievance according to Moffat. The men volunteered to work on the mines for 2s. a shift. Like other people, they should buy less if prices were high. But he said the right things about the colour bar. Africans and Coloured would not be content to do rough work only for ever. To arrest their advance would antagonize them and provoke industrial disputes. The tendency for the men to settle down and become permanent miners should be

encouraged, while the government ought to withdraw the colour bar in the regulations. This would free it from the odium of being a party to obstacles that prevented Africans from rising as their industry and ability entitled them. Finally, he remarked, so long as natives are denied the rights of citizenship as Parliamentary voters there can be no real contentment in the country.' These were wise words. They sounded the spirit of traditional Cape liberalism; and were ignored.

Some years later Andrews made this comment on the episode: 'of course, when the workers had taken their decision and were on strike the ISL did all it could in support.'1 The support it gave was negligible. The League did not possess the means to promote strikes and riots. Its membership had changed during its short life of three years. Most of the foundation members had drifted away, leaving a bare score of former Labour party members in the branches and only two on the management committee of thirteen. The gap was filled by a handful of white South Africans and a much larger number of immigrants from Europe, many of them Jewish, whom the League attracted by its solitary defence of the Russian revolution. Though tireless propagandists for Marxism, the new radicals lacked the industrial background of the League's founders. Andrews continued to be a source of strength among white workers. There were others, like C. B. Tyler of the Building Workers' Industrial Union, who worked mainly in the white unions. Yet the League was more isolated in 1918 from the bulk of the labour movement than at any time since its formation.

It was far more isolated from the rest of the population. The League had no Coloured or African members. In spite of their insistence on the African's revolutionary role, the socialists had failed to bridge the language and social gap between themselves and the masses, or to formulate a theory acceptable to Coloured and African leaders. The binary model of standard Marxist theory did not fit South Africa's multiple structure of colour, class and cultural groups. Even Jones, a natural Marxist of high degree, failed to appreciate the dynamic qualities of an indigenous national movement. He and his associates insisted that class, not colour, marked the great divide. They refused to bear the label 'negrophile', or support the struggle of the Africans as an oppressed race. Their

mission, they said, was to agitate among white workers for solidarity with blacks, and not to concern themselves with the civil disabilities of Indian storekeepers, African lawyers or Coloured middlemen.

The socialists agreed that white workers, who were the vanguard of revolution, could enter the promised land only by combining with the African. Had not Marx declared that ' Labour cannot emancipate itself in the White while in the Black it is branded?' Regrettably, the white worker feared the effects of an African rising. To allay his fears and absolve themselves of blame for riots, the socialists condemned the use of violence and even strikes as instruments of social change. Strikes, though inevitable, were old-fashioned and would diminish as the working class drew nearer to the 'general strike' which would finally eliminate the capitalist's rule. Violence did not pay, especially when pursued by the black proletariat. There was a great danger of violence if Africans were left to assert themselves without organization and guidance. The business of the League was to avoid a blood bath by preaching industrial unity and providing patient instruction. This would ensure peaceful change without 'such evils as the white workers justifiably fear.'

A greater danger stemmed from the tendency of the ruling class, nowhere more pronounced than in South Africa, to use violence in defence of the established order. In discussing this classic principle of revolutionary theory, the socialists acknowledged that their main reason for rejecting violence was the prospect that white workers would join in shooting Africans who revolted. What other conclusion could be drawn from Forrester Brown's offer to form workers' battalions to suppress African strikers? A member of the League and former war-on-warite, he had often urged his miners to accept Coloured workers on an equal footing and to organize African miners. Now he had succumbed to the 'corrupting influence of false labour organization, of labour-fakirdom, of mis-education, of capitalist flattery and bribery, of sectional and colour pride and prejudice.' In less abusive words, Brown followed the dictates of his union members who earned ten times as much as the African, bossed him around, and feared that he might one day take over their jobs. They would put

up with any kind of heresy from Brown as long as they believed that he would keep the door shut against the African.

The radical who appealed to white workers could hardly avoid reflecting their sentiments. Racial prejudice was 'insane' and 'suicidal', the socialists exclaimed, yet they confirmed it by alleging that Coloured workers had taken over the building trades in Cape Town, clerical posts in Durban, and semi-skilled work on the mines. The white man, they predicted, would be driven from all fields of employment unless he joined with the African in a struggle for equal pay. This was the Labour party's argument over again. It pointed, not to inter-racial solidarity, but to the white labour policy of sheltered employment behind colour bars. The League made other concessions to prejudice. It was ' not out to get the native admitted into the White Labour Unions'; or to preach equality under capitalism, for this was indeed a contradiction in terms. Equality would come only under socialism, when there would be room and plenty for all.

The League tried facing both ways and so fell between the stools of white supremacy and African nationalism. The white worker preferred racial solidarity to class war, and turned a deaf ear both to prophecies of disaster and promises of working-class power. Socialists assured him that he was not called upon to love the darker man as himself. Yet no lesser degree of devotion would persuade the African that he was being exploited as a worker and not as a member of an oppressed race. He claimed dignity, higher wages, better jobs and freedom from discrimination. The socialists gave him lectures on working-class emancipation and exhorted him to practise restraint until the day of liberation. They pleaded for unity and demanded equality. The concession failed to appease the whites and antagonized the leaders of national liberation who believed neither in the class theory nor in the vision of socialism.

The upsurge of nationalism in Europe made little immediate impact on the socialists. They saw in it the surface rumblings of a greater upheaval to come and equated it with Afrikaner nationalism. It was a 'petty bourgeois' movement which looked backward to the era of small property and would vanish before the wave of industrialism. This miscalculation can be traced, if only in part, to a narrow and dogmatic interpretation of the class

theory. The socialists believed, with some justification, that industrial experience would detach the Afrikaner worker from the landowners and intellectuals who led the Nationalist party. The League opened a fund to pay for leaflets in Afrikaans, and expressed sympathy with republican aspirations which tended to weaken the grip of British imperialism and could be used to help make landless Afrikaners see their true salvation in a socialist republic. But socialists could have no truck with the Nationalist party. It demanded self-determination for Afrikaners and denied it for Africans.

It bandied words like vrede and vryheid about, which meant only freedom to exploit the African. If the Nationalists came to power, and Africans resisted with the methods used by the rebels of 1914, 'it would be the signal for the greatest massacre of the native workers known in the history of South Africa.'

This was a fair assessment. The socialists made the mistake of applying the same kind of yardstick to African nationalism. It, too, was racialist, they said, because it attacked whites generally and 'the Boer' in particular. Congress leaders refused to see that class cut every nationality in two. They drew their people away from the workers' struggles into a 'ruthless opportunism'. Andrews addressed Congress in December 1918 and came away sceptical. servility could go no further' than the conference's protestations of loyalty to the crown. Socialists applauded the Congress campaign against the pass laws in 1919, but denounced in extravagant terms the appeals made for help to Britain and the United States. African nationalists were said to play the same part as the right wing in the labour movement. They were the 'Labour Fakirs of black South Africa, black bell-weathers for the capitalist class.'

Two things need to be said about the League's approach. Africans were not racialists. They wanted equality not black supremacy. They wished to free themselves from racial oppression and not to oppress the white man. In the second place, they were not Marxists. The basic cleavage in the society, as they saw it, did not run along class lines. White workers stood on the same side as Afrikaner landowners in the racial conflict. Africans would gain more by identifying themselves with British financial, industrial and commercial interests that profited by employing

the largest possible number of low-paid workers, and therefore opposed the colour bar. In more abstract terms, African and Coloured concepts of South African politics postulated an inherent antagonism between British imperialism and Afrikaner nationalism. Queen Victoria, Cape liberalism and the Unionist party symbolized the one; Hertzog represented the other. Like other colonial peoples in later years, African and Coloured leaders appealed for British intervention against their immediate oppressors. The appeals were futile, but the underlying assumption was no more erroneous than the socialist concept of a simple two-class division. Congress at least gained a better insight than the socialists did into some realities.

It was Congress, and not the International Socialist League, that protested against the transfer of South West Africa to the Union. The Congress resolution, adopted at its seventh annual conference in March 1919, asked that the conquered territory should be placed under France or America, if Britain refused for imperial reasons to annex the colony. To hand it to the Union would expose innocent natives to burgher tyranny and defeat the ideals that Africans had in view when insisting on British protection. Abdurahman and Fredericks made a similar plea on behalf of the APO to the governor-general and Lord Milner, and asked them to forward a memorandum on the issue to the Versailles peace conference. The memorandum reviewed the disabilities of the coloured peoples in the Transvaal and Orange Free State, which they regarded as the slave State of the British Empire'. The people of South West wanted to be controlled directly by the Imperial government, and shrank with terror from the prospect of becoming a part of the Union. The APO prayed that the peace conference would not take any irrevocable step 'that is bound to lay up for the British Empire in general, as well as for the Union of South Africa in particular, the seeds of racial unrest and endless disputes and strife'. None of the conquered territories should be handed to South Africa until it had removed the colour bar from its constitution, extended full political rights to all coloured peoples, and repealed the republican laws which still disfigured the statute book. No racial privileges or disabilities should be tolerated in the conquered territories.

The League's interest in African and Afrikaner nationalism dwindled after the war. The few hundred radical socialists on the Rand and in the port towns fixed their eyes on 'the Light from the East'. They celebrated the anniversary of the Russian revolution in November, and not the armistice. Copies of Andrews' pamphlet on the revolution and the Soviet constitution were widely circulated. Bunting drafted blue-prints for the coming revolution. The main burden would fall on the white workers, he wrote, if socialism came quickly in western Europe. Africans might form rural pitsos or soviets and send delegates to a national convention. Even the Labour party moved to the left in preparation for a general parliamentary election. Creswell suggested a reunion with the League 'now that the war is happily at an end', and promised a revised constitution to bring the radicals into the fold. They derided the offer as 'amusing, if not impertinent'. Andrews, who had taken over the post of secretary of the League from Tinker, scoffed at 'Labour lieutenants of the capitalist class'. There could be no unity between the Labour party, which functioned within the system, and international socialists who were dedicated to its destruction.

The socialists had trouble enough in keeping their own ranks united. A syndicalist faction was pressing hard for a withdrawal from all public elections. Members of the Cape SDF complained of its isolation. It had no young members and little contact with the Coloured, while Africans, who lived apart, were regarded ' as men coming from the *bundu* A. Z. Berman, J. Pick and M. Lopes decided to put theory into practice and formed the Industrial Socialist League in May 1918. They adopted the principles of the I W W and its programme of industrial unionism, the general strike, and no parliamentary politics. Their first attempt to organize a trade union ended in a rout, when they found the police waiting for them at the factory. Like the SDP, Berman and his associates confined their activities largely to propaganda for socialism and the Russian revolution.

Johannesburg's unrepentant syndicalist, Andrew Dunbar, repeated his performance of 1910-12 with similar results. He fell foul of the League's leadership by conducting a vigorous campaign against parliamentary elections, craft unionism and the alleged

reformist tendencies of the ISL. Bunting had described him three years earlier as an 'industrial Cincirmatus at his forge', a frequent defendant in sedition trials, and 'the most cheery of comrades, loyal of friends, reasonable of counsellors, good tempered and broadminded of collaborators, dogged and imperturbable of fighters.' Andrews, however, said he was disloyal and dropped him from the League's list of public speakers. The League's annual conference in January 1919 rejected his views and defeated a motion to delete from the constitution a clause calling for participation in elections. Later in the year Dunbar and his followers formed a Johannesburg branch of the Industrial Socialist League.

The conference decided to end the League's 'splendid isolation' by cooperating with other socialist bodies, and adopted a statement of principles drafted by Jones. This asserted that Labour could not emancipate itself until it had conquered all race and colour prejudice. The League's task was to educate, agitate and organize for revolution. The socialists would go out to inspire Africans to take their place in the ranks of the world proletariat, and to educate white workers to organize and cooperate with their African fellow worker in mine, factory and workshop. Some delegates thought that more attention should be given to Afrikaners, as little could be done with 'semi-savages'; but two African delegates from the IWA indignantly repudiated the stigma of 'savagery'. Finally, conference adopted a new statement of aims. The original objective had been to spread the message of international socialism, industrial unionism, and anti-militarism. Now the League would go forward 'To establish the Socialist Commonwealth.' Revolution appeared to be just round the corner at the beginning of 1919.

Jones did not attend the conference. He was being treated for tuberculosis in Pietermaritzburg's health centre. Here he wrote and distributed a pamphlet headed ' The Bolsheviks are Coming.' It explained, in English and Zulu, that Bolshevism meant 'the rule of the working class' and would soon spread everywhere. The capitalists feared that the workers of South Africa would follow the trail and also become free and independent. The working people should get ready for the world-wide Republic of Labour by combining regardless of colour, craft or creed. For 'while the black worker is oppressed, the white worker cannot be free'. Jones

was turned out of the centre and prosecuted, together with L. H. Greene, Pietermaritzburg's veteran socialist, on a charge of inciting to public violence. They submitted a statement which summarized the Communist Manifesto, and declared that their policy was the reverse of mob rule and violence. Their aim was 'to avoid on the industrial field the territorial strife of the pioneer and tribal days.'

The prosecution called police officers, native affairs department officials, employers and Africans to testify that the leaflet would excite, stimulate and alarm the i native mind.' The accused had offered 'the enticing possibility of taking over the country'. The African witnesses said that the leaflet might provoke disorder and bring back the days of Tshaka. Josiah Gumede, the secretary of the Natal Native Congress and editor of *Ilange Lase Natal*, thought that the African would be made a slave if the Bolsheviks took over the government. He feared a republic and placed his faith in British military power. The magistrate held that the leaflet was libellous, treasonable, and indeed diabolical; 'while the idea that a South African Lenin might conceivably be a Bantu suggested lunacy'. He sentenced each of the accused to pay a fine of 75 and undergo four months' imprisonment. The Supreme Court upheld the appeal and set the convictions aside. The leaflet, said the judge, advocated a policy quite unlike that of armed insurrection and could have had no effect on the prosecution of the war.

Gumede left soon after the trial with an ANC deputation for England in terms of a decision taken by a special conference at Johannesburg on 16 December 1918. More than one branch had suggested that Africans should be represented at the peace conference, though *Imvo* ridiculed the 'Native Nationalists' for wasting their money on a foolish project which was bound to fail, as had the deputation of 1909.[39] Meshach Pelem, president of the Bantu Union, explained that the peace conference afforded a unique opportunity which might never recur to' represent the vexed native question to the Imperial authorities, as well as to the Christian and the civilized world.' Congress deputed L. T. Mvabaza, managing director of *Abantu Batho*, Selope Thema, its editor, Sol Plaatje, Gumede and the Rev. Ngcayiya, president of the Ethiopian church, to petition the king for Freedom, Liberty, Justice and Fairplay.

They interviewed the colonial office in May and August with the usual negative results. Britain, they were told, could not intervene in the domestic affairs of a self-governing dominion. Lloyd George gave a similar answer on 7 June to Hertzog's 'freedom' deputation of eight Afrikaner nationalist delegates. These requested independence for South Africa or, if that was denied, then independence for the Free State and Transvaal. Lloyd George replied that Britain could not mediate in a dispute between sections of the South African population. 'As one of the Dominions of the British Commonwealth, the South African people control their own national destiny in the fullest sense.' Dominion self-government, retorted Hertzog, fell far short of independence. By taking part in imperial councils, for instance, South Africa necessarily assumed responsibility for imperial policies, with all their attendant problems and dangers.

Africans did not control their national destiny. This was the gravamen of their complaint. Gumede spelled it out in a long letter in September on the failure of their mission. It reproached Britain for having assented to the colour bar in the South African Act, and declared that the Natives Land Act had reduced them to a condition worse than slavery. 'Why shall veiled slavery be permitted in a British Dominion, under the British Flag?' he asked. 'A section of this British dominion wants a Republic, and how will the natives fare?' They objected emphatically to the contemplated handing over of Basutoland, Swaziland, Bechuanaland, Rhodesia and German South West Africa to the Union of South Africa. Mvabaza reminded Lloyd George that 93,000 Africans had responded to Britain's call for help in South West and East Africa. They had answered the call, and expected to get some benefit from President Wilson's Fourteen Points.

Lloyd George took special note of the ten kinds of passes that Africans were forced to carry: the identification certificate, tax receipt, travelling pass, permit to seek work, labour registration, monthly permit, resident's permit, visitor's permit, night pass and scholar's pass. If South Africa were under the direct control of the colonial office, he would examine their grievances very carefully. He recognized with gratitude their loyal services to the flag in the great struggle for freedom throughout the world. Referring to

Hertzog's deputation, he thought that it interpreted the principle of self-determination in a very curious manner by claiming independence for South Africa in the name of only one-third of the white population and none of the coloured peoples. But Britain had to take the constitutional position of a self-governing dominion into account. He could do no more than communicate direct with Botha and Smuts on the subject of the grievances, which the deputation had presented with very great power and in clear and temperate language.

Africans and Afrikaners returned knowing the futility of appeals for aid from abroad. Their struggle for national liberation would be fought out on South African soil. Britain's strategic and economic interests were opposed to any kind of nationalism that would weaken the alliance between Afrikaner landowners and British investors, mine owners and industrialists. Gumede absorbed the lesson. His political career took a turn to the left that led him into close association with the communists. As president of the ANC he accompanied James la Guma to Brussels in 1927 to attend the first international conference of the League against Imperialism. He travelled further, to the Soviet Union, and came away with glowing impressions of its policy of equality and national autonomy for the dark-skinned Asians in its eastern territories. The man who had once denounced Bolshevism in a trial of communists became a firm supporter of their party. The right wing of Congress ousted him from the presidency for this reason in 1930. Many other Africans underwent a similar radical change in the stormy decade that followed the war.

The two 'great evils' — discontentment and political consciousness which were sought to be avoided by the British — had crept into the Indian armed forces

In January 1942, the pressure on Britain increased further. This was mainly due to the Japanese threat from the East and the consequent US intervention in favour of Indian Independence in order to strengthen resistance against Japan. The British were led to realise that: any step in the constitutional sphere which would alienate Muslim opinion might have the most serious repercussions on India's war effort whereas active assistance of the Indian National Congress would not make much difference to India's

fighting strength though it would be of value internally in such matters as civil defence. Under the circumstances, the British officials had to cast a favourable glance at the demand for Pakistan, even though they were not yet prepared to commit themselves on the issue of Pakistan. They accepted in principle that the dissident units could opt out of the federation 'for the time being and possibly altogether.' This, they thought, would meet Jinnah's demand and at the same time induce the Congress to come to terms with the Muslims provinces in order to secure a United India. The Cripps Mission was sent to India precisely for this purpose. It, however, failed in its purpose because it did not give the Congress and the Muslim League control of Indian defence, nor did it withdraw the provision of the non-accession for the provinces. Perhaps, deep down, the British government was happy at the Mission's failure because it did not like any fundamental change in the service conditions of the Indian troops which could have an 'unsettling effect' on them while the war was in progress.

But the result of the Cripps Proposals was that the British, for the first time, accepted the principle of the non-accession of the provinces to the Indian Union, giving the demand for Pakistan a touch of acceptable reality. Naturally, the Muslim League came out much stronger than before, especially in the Punjab and Bengal, giving Jinnah a position of pre-eminence.

In August 1942, the Congress, dissatisfied by the August offer and the Cripps proposals, decided to exert pressure on the British by launching the Quit India movement. The timing of the movement was obviously designed to take advantage of the war situation. Japan, which had already conquered Burma, was expected to invade India soon after the monsoon was over in September 1942. The Quit India movement, however, failed. Its failure brought out the fact that no movement could succeed without the support of the Muslim League and the Muslims.

During the 1943-45 period, when the fortunes of the war turned in favour of Allied victory, the British began to wriggle out of their previous stance *vis-a-vis* the Muslims and in favour of a united India. But Jinnah could not be deterred from his demand as he had faith in the inherent strength of the Muslim potential and had realised the importance of the military factor in British

decision making. Early in 1944, the Congress was also forced to acknowledge the importance of the Muslim League which is evident from the initiatives such as the Gandhi-Jinnah talks. It is another matter that the initiatives did not bear fruit as the Congress was not prepared to accede to the demand for Pakistan. In early 1945, fresh moves were made by the Congress for which the Liaquat-Desai understanding was reached. But the basic problem between them remained unresolved as the Congress leadership was not willing to meet the Muslim League on an equal footing.

Nevertheless, the British government had been obliged to seek greater association of Indians in the councils of the government. The Muslims came out even better because they received a much greater representation than their numerical strength warranted. Obviously, the war had changed the British attitude in which their concern for possible repercussions in the Muslim Middle East played in important role. They were also not unmindful of the Allied interest in the independence of India.

This naturally strengthened the determination of the Muslim League to fight for the achievement of Pakistan. But then, towards the end of the war, the British began once more to balance their relations with the Congress when the latter showed its inclination to co-operate with the government. A united India again became a popular theme with the British. The result was that when the war came to an end, the Muslim League had to struggle even harder, for the British policy was geared to ensuring a united India. The object of the 1945 Simla Conference was, therefore, to by-pass the Pakistan issue and to get the political parties working together in the central government. But Simla could not kill the Pakistan issue. Wavell then decided to expose 'the crudity of Jinnah's ideas' and put the Pakistan scheme to examination with counter proposals. The idea was to discover some alternative to Pakistan and make the Muslim participate in the formation of an Indian constitution. But the result of the elections of 1945-46 demonstrated that an overwhelming majority of Muslims wanted Pakistan. The British government, however, remained firm on keeping India united and, in March 1946, a British Cabinet Mission came to India which rejected the case of a 'sovereign' Pakistan. Instead, it recommended a three-tier constitution in which an

'autonomous' Pakistan was proposed. Initially, the Muslim League accepted the Plan, perhaps as a stepping stone towards a sovereign Pakistan, but later rejected it because the Congress was not prepared to accept the scheme of the grouping of the provinces as envisaged in the Plan. The Cabinet Mission failed, but the Government of India showed a definite tilt towards the Congress. This led the Muslim League to declare its intention of resorting to 'Direct Action.'

The British government, in order to share responsibility and keep India integrated, announced the formation of an Interim government consisting of the Congress, the Muslim League, and other minorities. Accordingly, on September 2, 1946, an interim government headed by Nehru was sworn in. Some seven weeks later, the Muslim League also joined it. But since the arms and objectives of both the parties were divergent, no working co-operation between them could be established. The Congress members demanded the resignation of the Muslim League members of the government on the grounds that the League's working committee had resolved that it would not join the Constituent Assembly of India. This demand was not acceded to by the British, because they thought it would be 'fatal' for the government to keep the League out.

But the problem remained unsolved. This led the British government to call a conference of important political leaders in London. Consequently, on December 6, 1946, the British government announced that it would not like to force a constitution upon the unwilling parts of the country which shows that the situation had taken such a turn that they just could not dismiss the case of Pakistan. In the ultimate analysis, however, much depended on the attitude of the armed forces. The two 'great evils' — discontentment and political consciousness which were sought to be avoided by the British government — had crept into the Indian armed forces. The discontentment was caused due to discriminatory treatment meted out to them in terms of service conditions and resettlement schemes after retirement.

The induction of the educated element in the forces and the acceleration of the process of Indianisation had made them conscious of rapid political change. There had also been a growing

feeling that they were being used as mercenaries. There had been instances of mutinies during the war which show the pressure of discontentment and unrest. After the war was over, the hero worship of ex-INA personnel encouraged the troops in believing that mutiny was more rewarding than remaining loyal to the British. The Naval Mutiny in Bombay and Karachi and, later, among the airmen at a number of bases and some elements in the army at Jabalpore were symptomatic of such feelings. The police and the railwaymen also felt the pinch as did the general public which came out into the streets and participated in anti-British riots. The revolt of the military could not be allowed to spread and the British quickly reassured them that the subcontinent would be made independent.

The Indian army was designed to be a loyal and a secular force devoid of any political affiliations, but times had changed. The 'virus of communalism' had spread in its ranks. When the prospects of Independence became brighter, it appeared to the Muslim League that neither the British nor the Congress would agree to the establishment of an Independent Muslim state. A civil war between the Muslims and the Hindus was a logical corollary which was likely to involve the Indian armed forces. And since the loyalty of the latter could not now be ensured implicitly the British decided to withdraw from India.

The threatened involvement of Indian troops in Hindu-Muslim fighting made the British even more unsteady and they decided to leave India definitely by June 1948. It was obvious that India could not remain united. It was already writ large in the shape of Hindu-Muslim fighting which had spread all over the country. The use of British troops in the civil war was effective, but the dilemma for the government was that it could not involve them in 'communal' fighting for long or bring adequate reinforcements from home.

The Indian army was designed to be a loyal and a secular force devoid of any political affiliations, but times had changed. The 'virus of communalism' had spread in its ranks. Some of the members of the armed forces were quick to assure their loyalty to the political leaders of their respective communities. There was also talk of *jihad* if the Muslim League was ignored or its demand

rejected. This was certainly going to involve the Muslim tribes of the Northwest India and possibly Afghanistan. In such an eventuality, the Indian armed forces could not be relied upon the their was a chance for the army to split and take sides of their co-religionists. Under these circumstances the British realised that if power was transferred to the Congress by-passing the Muslim League, the 'communal' fighting would be intensified and it would become difficult for the Europeans to extricate themselves from the interior of the country. By early 1947, the Pakistan movement had become so strong that it could not be checkmated either by the British or the Hindus. Both of them, therefore, agreed to the division of India. But even after the acceptance the British tried to keep India united in some form. The main reason was that they did not want to divide the Indian armed forces. This was necessary not only for the security of the British lives and property in India but also for the future defence of the subcontinent from a possible Soviet threat and for their undisturbed use in an integrated system of the defence of the Commonwealth countries.

The British also needed a secure and a peaceful ally in India so that they could continue to use her naval and air bases. This was essential for the British to maintain their lines of communication with their colonies in the Far East. The British, therefore, did their best to impress upon the Muslim League leaders that they should not demand the division of the armed forces. They argued that from the economic, military and strategic points of view it was imperative that they must have a common army and a joint defence of Hindustan and Pakistan. The Congress supported the move but the Muslim League firmly rejected the suggestion. Jinnah forcefully argued that if the defence of India was considered as one whole, the case of Pakistan would fall to the ground. Therefore, the Muslim League insisted on the division of the armed forces prior to Partition. It demanded an increase in the percentage of Muslim officers and men in the armed forces. The British, however, continued to side-track the issue and, even after the announcement of June 3, 1947 plan for the independence and the partition of India, Mountbatten insisted on some such arrangements or at least having a common governor-general of both Hindustan and Pakistan.

This demand was the logical conclusion of the British insistence on keeping India a united country with its armed forces undivided within the British Commonwealth. By having British officers, a British commander-in-chief and a British governor-general, they wished to maintain an all-British chain of command for as long as possible. The Muslim League firmly rejected a united army, a permanent joint defence agreement or a common governor-general which would have practically jeopardised the sovereign status of Pakistan. The Muslim League, therefore, succeeded in its struggle to achieve an independent and sovereign state notwithstanding the British and the Congress pressure.

THE BRITISH ARGUED THAT IT WAS IMPERATIVE FOR HINDUSTAN AND PAKISTAN TO HAVE A COMMON ARMY

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Pakistan without Calcutta would be like Asking a man to Live without his Heart

It remains, however, to recount in brief the events in sequel of the June 3, 1947 Plan. Mountbatten had originally envisaged the division of British India into three dominions: Hindustan, Pakistan and the free state of Bengal, each of which was to be an independent member of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

The territories of Pakistan were to include provinces of the West Punjab, Sind and the NWFP. The state of Bengal was to have the province of Bengal and the chief commissioner's province of the Andaman and the Nicobar Islands. A united Greater Bengal was also championed by Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy, the chief minister of Bengal. Jinnah and the Muslim League wanted a united Bengal as a part of their new state. "Pakistan without Calcutta would be like asking a man to live without his heart," Jinnah had argued.

Mountbatten seems to have supported the idea of a united Bengal in order to have a united Indian army. Suhrawardy, however, emphasised upon Mountbatten to have a separate army of Bengal. Though the British seemed to have agreed in principle

that the assets of India, including the armed forces, should be divided between the three states, the difficulties of creating two new armies for two Muslims successor states were immense. But since the Congress was not amenable to the idea of a united free state of Bengal, the proposal was dropped. Nehru accepted the division of Bengal thinking that east Bengal would be so unlivable economically that it would come back into the Indian Union within a few years. Accordingly, the Muslim majority districts of the province of Bengal including the Chittagong Hill Tracts were separated from East Pakistan. However, a referendum in Sylhet district of Assam was agreed to and it gave its verdict in favour of Pakistan. The freedom-loving Pathans considered the British Raj to be their natural enemy and they were happy to find an ally in the Congress, the other great enemy of the Raj. After World War II, when it appeared to them that the Congress was replacing the British Raj and assuming the control of the North-West Frontier Province, the alliance could not last.

The Muslim League slogans of "no Hindu Raj" and "Muslim unity" appealed to the Pathans. Since October, 1946, there was a definite swing of the people in favour of the Muslim League. By December 1946, the Muslim League had decided to extend its activities to the tribal areas as well. In March 1947, the Muslim League firmly planted its feet after it launched the Civil Disobedience Movement against the Congress government in the province. The provincial government failed to suppress the movement in spite of assistance of the police and the armed forces. The increasing influence of the Muslim League was "causing exodus of large numbers of non-Muslims" from the province. Mountbatten confirmed to the British government that due to the Muslim League campaign, the situation in the province was "very explosive."

So far as the NWFP was concerned, the Mountbatten Plan proposed a referendum to ascertain if the province wished to join Pakistan or Hindustan. The option of Independence, as demanded by the Congress, was not agreed to by the British government for being in contravention of the June 3 Plan. Besides military authorities had felt that the NWFP, in order to withstand a possible adventure from the Soviet Union, should be under Muslim

domination. The referendum, held in 2nd week of July 1947, was supervised by the British army officers of the Indian army.

To the satisfaction of Mountbatten, Gandhi had advised Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan to remain peaceful during the elections. The results were overwhelmingly in support of Pakistan. Of the total Muslim electorates, about 60 per cent votes were cast for Pakistan. The Congress vigorously advocated the idea of "Pathanistan", but Dr Khan Sahib was reported to be willing to "co-operate and accept Pakistan if Jinnah would agree to full provincial autonomy."

The province of Sind already had enjoyed the support of the Muslim League ministry and it voted for Pakistan. In June 1947, the British Baluchistan also decided unanimously to join the Pakistan Constituent Assembly at an extraordinary session of the Shahi Jirga. The case of the Punjab was, however, more complicated. Under the Mountbatten Plan, the Punjab was to be partitioned like Bengal. But here, the Congress and the Sikhs demanded protection of their rights. Accordingly, a boundary commission was created to pacify the Sikhs. Jinnah and Liaquat violently protested against this to Mountbatten, but it had little effect. Thus a number of Muslim majority areas were handed over to the Indian Union. The decision to do so was primarily based on military and political grounds. Nehru claimed a "simpler frontier based on some natural barrier" and not one with "numerous curves and enclaves," which would create many difficulties including the question of defence.

Baldev Singh, the defence member, also supported Nehru on grounds of defence. Of the Muslim majority areas handed over to the Indian Union, Gurdaspur and Ferozpur were prominent. It is a matter of record that initially the salient enclosing the whole of Ferozpur and areas adjacent to Zira tehsils were included in Pakistan. But on August 10 or 11, even Jenkins, the governor of the Punjab, received a secrophone message from Viceroy House ordering action to "eliminate salient."

As for Gurdaspur district, Justice Muhammad Munir, who was a member of the Boundary Commission, later observed about his British chairman that: 'Sir Cyril adopted a circuitous and disingenuous plan to link India with Kashmir by not drawing a line along any main physical feature but along an insignificant hill torrent having its origin in Kashmir.' Though Pakistan suffered in the division of the provinces and the accession of the states, the field where it was better placed came to be the armed forces.

The British did not want to annoy Nehru who wanted "a certain variation of the boundary line." It was argued that the boundaries were determined as a result of "the judgement of an eminent lawyer," who had "no conceivable axe to grind" in Indian politics. But the honourable member of the British Bar "departed from the tradition of British justice, perhaps, because the matter was not judicial but political." As for the Andaman and Nicobar islands, Mountbatten's initial Partition plan had given these to the proposed free state of Bengal. But since June 3 Plan had given East Bengal to Pakistan, Jinnah laid a claim to these islands. He argued that the islands were never a part of India and the population consisted of tribes who were not connected with the people of Indian by ethnic, cultural or religious ties.

He pointed out that the only channel of communication between East and West Pakistan was by sea and these islands occupied a strategic position on that route and provided refueling bases. Jinnah also desired to discuss the future of these islands before August 15, from a defence point of view. The viceroy was, however, advised against negotiations with the Indian leaders on defence matters before that date. Naturally, this strategy led to the handing over the islands to India. The problem of the princely states was even more complicated. The Mountbatten Plan had envisaged that the withdrawal of the British could mean giving a free choice to the states to remain independent or join with either of the successor dominions. Mountbatten, however, saw to it that none of the states would exercise its choice for Independence. It was his policy that they must join one of the two dominions according to their geographical position, conceding at least defence, foreign affairs and communication to the central authority.

The secretary of state for India also advised him that "it was out of question for Britain to do anything to encourage states to stand out completely." The Congress leaders has also asked Mountbatten not to do anything to encourage the states to declare their independence. It appears that the United States had exercised its influence on Britain not to grant independence to the states.

Though the British wanted the states to accede to one of the dominions, it appears that, in case of a tie, the government's preference was for India. The reason, in the words of Mountbatten, was that the Indian Union "consisting nearly three-fourth of India and with its immense resources and its important strategic position in the Indian Ocean" could not be estranged. Naturally, he was found to be "working hard" on the representatives of certain major states to accede to India.

From the viewpoint of Pakistan, the accession of the states of Hyderabad and Kashmir are more significant. The Hyderabad state was about the size of England and Scotland put together, with a population of 17 million and a regular army. It was a land-locked state and was in need of a seaport. On July 1, 1947, Hyderabad issued a *farman* that after the departure of the British, the state would be independent.

Mountbatten and W T Monkton, the British adviser to the government of Hyderabad, tried their best "in a coordinated plan of campaign," to bring the Nizam to accede to India. Jinnah warned Mountbatten that in case the Congress attempted to exert any pressure on Hyderabad, the hundred million Muslims would "rise as one man to defend the oldest Muslim dynasty in India."

Mountbatten, however, hoped that the "Nizam need not fear any armed intervention" and the Congress would be able to disrupt the dynasty from within. The facts proved otherwise. The Congress was unable to wreck the dynasty from within and Hyderabad had to suffer the onslaught of an Indian military intervention immediately after Jinnah's death in September 1948.

The state of Jammu and Kashmir is a typical example where all other dictates were sacrificed at the altar of strategic interests of India. From the geographical, historical, demographic, economic and geopolitical points of view, Kashmir should have acceded to Pakistan. But Mountbatten had been emphasising upon certain states, including Kashmir to join the Indian Union because of their geographical location.

As early as June 1947, Nehru had formally asked Mountbatten that though Muslims formed 77.11% of the population in the Jammu and Kashmir state, it should go to India. The foremost

reason for his demand was that the state was "of the first importance to India as a whole... because of the great strategic importance of that frontier state." Jinnah publicly indicated that wisdom demanded that the ruler of Kashmir would not ignore, much less hurt, "feelings and sentiments of the Muslims" who formed 80% of the population. But, in the end, the Mountbatten-Nehru collusion succeeded in bringing the ruler of Kashmir into declaring accession to India. Thus the fate of four million people, more than three quarters Muslim, was settled not by the popular wish but by the whims of one man, with the active encouragement and support of the last viceroy of the British Crown.

Though Pakistan suffered in the division of the provinces and the accession of the states, the field where it was better placed came to be the armed forces. Although the population of Pakistan was about 25% of the Indian subcontinent, its share of the amed forces was about 33%. But the Pakistan army had an initial setback that its forces were neither organised nor all of them available in Pakistan. In fact, Lieutenant General Frank W Messervy, British GOC-in-C of the Northern Command, replied to the viceroy, that out of 67 battalions available in West Pakistan, only 35 would be left there. Even these were to be at half strength owing to the movement of Hindu and Sikh companies. No Muslim companies were available in Pakistan for any replacement. This was precisely one of the reasons that the Pakistan army could not be used in Kashmir in October 1947 against the Indian military intervention. Later, when the Pakistan army was a little better organised it prevented the Indian forces from occupying the entire state of Kashmir and forced India to seek a cease-fire.

But since the basic tensions remained unresolved, it was natural for the two armed forces to clash, as they did in the 1965 and 1971. And even thereafter the historical, geo-political and strategic compulsions cannot be overlooked as they would continue to determine the course of history in times to come.

After the annexation of the Punjab, which, despite the myth of hard fought battles, was never conquered, but was a gift to Dalhousie, the author of the infamous doctrine of lapse by the Phulkean States, headed by Patiala and assisted, in this perfidious game by Gulab Singh, the ruler of, Jammu, a fresh revenue

settlement was considered necessary. Some Indian officers of outstanding merit, with a special knowledge of revenue law, were sent to the Punjab. One such officer was Munshi Madho Prasad, who was then a Deputy Collector in these provinces. He served there with great distinction. He belonged to Allahabad. He was the father of three sons, Ajodhya Prasad, Kamta Prasad and Ram Prasad. The first two, like their father, became Deputy Collectors. The third, the subject of this sketch, was offered the same post, which was then the summit of an Indian's ambition. But he chose the legal profession. He qualified himself as a Vakil and settled down at Allahabad, his home town.

He started practice in the district courts. He soon picked up a good practice both on the civil side and criminal. Those were not the days when a young man had to "luxuriate in a briefless existence" and wait long; but, even as it was, his success was almost phenomenal. He caught the eye of Mr. Knox, later Sir George Knox, an Englishman of large and liberal sympathies, who was at that time the Small Cause Court Judge, Allahabad, a post then reserved for the members of the I. C. S. Mr. Knox secured him the post of the District Government Pleader, which then was a very coveted office, both for its emoluments and its dignity. It meant not only the titular, but also the de facto, leadership of the Bar. Unlike today, when merit is not the only, even the principal, test, the best men at the Bar used to be selected for the office. He had already made his mark as a very astute lawyer with a commanding practice on both sides and his choice was not unexpected. He, it was a foregone conclusion, eminently justified it. He was, after a year or so, the undisputed leader of the District Bar. After a few years, Sir P. C. Banerji was appointed to succeed Mr. Knox, who was elevated to the office of the Legal Remembrancer, a post then marked out for members of the I. C. S. of outstanding merit and ability. Sir P. C. Banerji was the first Indian to hold that office. He too formed a very high opinion about Munshi Ram Prasad. Then followed an event, unique in the annals of judicial appointments.

Munshi Jwala Prasad, who was the Government Pleader, High Court retired. The post was, according to tradition and practice, expected to go to one of the leading and senior practitioners of the High Court. But, to the surprise of all and disappointment of a few, it went to an unknown-at least in the High Court-young man, who was a stranger to the High Court. Mr. Knox, who, as said above, had formed a very high opinion about the subject of this sketch, was then the Legal Remembrancer. The office was virtually in his gift. He straightaway appointed him Government Pleader, High Court. It was a serious disappointment to the candidates and aspirants for the office and attempts were not wanting to make his task difficult. But, so well did he adapt himself to his new environments and so conspicuous was his success, that, in the very first case he argued for the Crown-it was a Government appeal from acquittal in a murder case, in which the Government Advocate had somewhat hurriedly and unexpectedly passed on the brief to him-he was openly and highly complimented by Sir Douglas Straight, one of the, ablest Judges, Allahabad ever had.

But, in the case of Munshi Ram Prasad, the rubicon was crossed and, within a few years, he shared the leadership of the Bar, on the civil side with Colvin, Conlan and J. N. Chaudhri. Sunder Lal, though he had joined the High Court earlier, came after him. Moti Lal Nehru was also rapidly forging ahead. On the civil side, among the Barristers, was another very gifted young man, Strachey who was also making very rapid strides both as a civil and criminal lawyer. As Government Pleader he had to encounter Sir Walter Colvin who was at the top also on the criminal side, Strachey till his appointment as Government Advocate when Hill was raised to the Bench at Calcutta, Charles Coleman Dillon, Ross Alston and Chamier. Later Strachey went to Bombay as a puisne Judge and returned to Allahabad as its Chief Justice. Chamier succeeded Strachey, then he went to Luckncw as the Judicial Commissioner, returned to Allahabad as a puisne Judge and finally went to Patna as its first Chief Justice in 1915. What a galaxy of names! I had heard Dillon and Alston and Moti Lal Nehru toe, once or twice. When I think of the forensic encounters of these giants, I find myself in the wonder-land. Would that those spacious days could come back! Then could we proudly say, what was said of those days that what the Bar thinks today, that the rest of the country thinks tomorrow.

When my father entered the profession he straightaway joined the Chamber of Munshi Ram Prasad. Father used to tell me amazing stories of the intellectual gifts of his senior. He was an all-rounder, a great advocate, a perfect draftsman, a first rate case builder and a brilliant cross-examiner. He could pick up the brief in no time, however complicated the facts or heavy the brief or difficult the questions of law. There was something Napoleonic in his mental equipment. Napolean, they say, could do several things at a time. Munshi Ram Prasad could, it is said, attend to a number of his manifold activities at one and the same time. His arguments were short, pithy, effective and left nothing to be desired. He was, for this reason, a special favourite of the Judges. Father used to say that at Allahabad Sir Walter Colvin alone could be mentioned in the same breath with him. Both excelled in every branch of the law and in every phase of an Advocate. Later in life I pointedly put it to Dr. Tej Bahadur Sapru, Mr. Satya Chandra Mukerji and Munshi Haribans Sahai. They all agreed, but Dr. Sapru added a rider. To him Conlan, Colvin and Ram Prasad stood on the same footing. But, be it noted, that Conlan was an exclusively civil lawyer.

He was one of the four successful advocates whom Sir John Edge, for the first time since the establishment of the High Court, raised to the status of an advocate in 1896. It was a bold step of great imagination and, at least in some measure, heaved down the barrier of ages. The other three were J. N. Chaudhri, Sunderlal and Moti Lal Nehru. There was hardly an important case in which he did not appear. He remained at the top till the end.

He was a man of versatile activities. He took a keen interest in the educational problems of the country. He was the President of the Kayastha Pathshala, then too, one of the foremost educational institutions of the Province. Its founder, Munshi Kali Prasad, was one of the leaders of the Lucknow Bar. Its first and life President was Munshi Hanuman Prasad, one of the leaders of the Allahabad Bar. After the latter's death the crown was placed on the head of Munshi Ram Prasad and a more deserving choice could not be made. Cassandras were not wanting who predicted a dismal future, because, they argued, his hands were already too full. But, they all turned cut false prophets. To his massive mind the fresh

responsibility hardly meant an added burden. The institution made enormous strides during his regime.

If a slight digression is permissible, Satish, before he formally joined the legal profession had to acquire distinction of sitting at the feet of the peerless Mahmood, as before him, Sir Arthur Strachey had done. Strachey and Satish were Mahmood's greatest pupils. To Munshi Ram Prasad and Munshi Ram Prasad alone did the Kayastha Pathshala owe its distinguished position.If Munshi Kali Prasad founded it and Munshi Hanuman Prasad nursed it, it was during his regime that it flowered into something unique.

He was a deeply religious man. The magnificent temple built by him and known after his name, with its lawns and other accessories, in the heart of the town, is a monument of his devotion to his faith. Most of his time, both morning and evening, was occupied with his religion. In the morning, he hardly gave an hour to his profession or to his other activities. His programme in the evening was characteristic of him. After return from court, after a short rest, he would go with my father to his temple. Some times I also accompanied him. Learned Pandits, Sadhus and religious divines of other persuasions too, would gather and hold discussion till late in the evening. I was too young to follow anything except this that even in that august assembly he was like a "tall cliff" that dwarfed the rest.

Even as a young man he was sedate like Milton, whose:

"Pleasures were of crimeless kind,

That ne'er taint the soul."

One phase of Munshi Ram Prasad's character has always to be emphasised. No junior in need approached him in vain. Preference may be made to one case in particular. Munshi Ram Prasad assisted by my father argued a heavy First Appeal from Aligarh for the appellants and convinced the Judges in his favour. Mr. Conlan, replying for the respondent, cited in his favour an English authority.

Sunder Lal had brought out the case, after great deal of research, Conlan succeeded in almost turning the scale. My father as though instinctively, rushed up to Dr. Satish Chandra Banerji,

who though still very young, had made his mark for scholarship.

Satish gave father a later English authority dissenting from the earlier one. The table turned and Munshi Ram Prasad won. The client paid a heavy amount on account of what is echnically called shukrana. Munshi Ram Prasad directed father to pass on the entire amount to young Satish. The latter declined, but was ultimately prevailed upon to accept it. I know of only such instance. Placed in similar circumstances, Mr. W. C. Bannerji gave the entire sum to a young and obscure junior, who subsequently rose to unattainable heights Satyendra Prasanna Sinha, later Lord Sinha.

It is not surprising that he was not only respected, but also loved. On the death of Hallam, Tennyson said:

> *"If all the world had known the heart*
>
> *I would deem the praise he had it yields, Scanty.*

When Ram Prasad died, Sir George Knox, then Acting Chief Justice, spoke most feelingly:

> *"I deem it a privilege that it was given to me as Legal Remembrancer to appoint him Government Pleader of this Court. I am proud and happy to say that, at no moment of his life, did he disappoint the expectations I had then formed of him."*

A richer tribute to a lawyer could not be paid, never was it better deserved.

It was said of Sir Rash Behari Ghosh that men like him, by their very presence, raise the stature of the profession. So can it be said about the subject of this sketch. As I dwell, in my mind, upon his exalted character and noble heart, I feel that he possessed, what is essential for success in every sphere of life, that great virtue, which Morley ascribed to Mill, his preceptor and guide,

> *"Wisdom and goodness and that rare union of moral ardour with a calm and settled mind"*

and, I might add, that generous purpose to give the best of himself to every noble cause.

3

Gandhi and the Indian National Congress

Mahatma Gandhi's entry and meteoric rise in the Indian political scenario following his return from South Africa in 1918, has been variously equated with the emergence of a guiding light to a breath of fresh air. Indian national Congress was the single most popular party, spearheading India's war for independence when Gandhi returned, having led two successful revolutions in South Africa. They were conducted on the lines of Satyagraha, Gandhi's personal mode of non-violent resistance. Indian National Congress (INC), at that point was dominated by the combative policies of the extremists. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai and Bipin Chandra Pal were the chief propagators of these extremist tendencies within the ranks of the INC. Gandhi's modes and ideologies were markedly different, and were slow to gain acceptance. However, he soon became a member of the Indian National Congress, and then embarked in a nationwide journey under the command and wish of Sri Gopal Krishna Gokhale, his political mentor. What he saw reaffirmed in his mind his already firm faith in the ideals of satyagraha. The Home Rule movement under Tilak and Annie Besant were far from successful, and Gandhi knew that no mode of armed revolution could make India free from the clutches of the British rule.

SATYAGRAHA AT CHAMPARAN AND KHEDA

Gandhi's political career took a head start when he went to lead satyagraha against the indigo merchants at Champaran in Bihar. He raised his voice against the unbearable exploitation of

the indigo farmers of the region. His methods, as always, were based on non-violence, and he met with success. The British authorities were forced to accept to the demandes of the indigo workers. He repeated his success at Kheda in Gujarat against the increasing revenues and taxed imposed by the government on the farmers at rural Gujarat. Once again, the processes were non-violent. With these successes, Gandhi was hailed as the new light in the Indian political scenario. He gained the appellation of the Mahatma (the great soul) and Bapu (father). Soon Rowlatt Act and the subsequent massacre at Jalianwallah Bagh at Amritsar in Punjab considerably heated up the scenario of Indian politics. Gandhiji assumed the responsibilities of the president of Indian National Congress in 1921, and unleashed a series of reforms in the party ranks, thereby giving impetus to the non-cooperation movement, that by that time took the entire nation in its grip.

MAHATMA GANDHI AS THE PRESIDENT OF INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

Mahatma Gandhi was elected as the president of the Indian National Congress in 1921. He immediately introduced a number of reforms within the party ranks. The first responsibility that Gandhi undertook as the president of the Indian National Congress was to increase the reach of the party among the masses who reside in the remote corners in order to eradicate its elitist status. Gandhi famously stated that rural India was the very backbone of the country, both in economic and in logistical terms. Therefore no movement can be truly successful unless whole-heartedly supported by the inhabitants of the Indian villages. The first step that he took was to considerably reduce the membership fee of the party. Then he restructured the entire party hierarchy, and opened new party branches at various provinces and princely states of India. Soon congress took a national dimension with membership multiplied manifold. Gandhi became the new guiding star of Indian politics, operating under the umbrella of the Indian National Congress.

As the president of the Indian National Congress, Mahatma Gandhi introduced the tenets and the ideals of Satyagraha, and the party saw the emergence of many new and charismatic leaders with great public appeals, who were loyal followers of Gandhi. By then, Lala Lajpat Rai also became an admirer of Gandhi in spite of former differences. With such great following, non-cooperation movement against the Rowlatt Act and the Amritsar tragedy naturally took massive national dimension.

GANDHI'S CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS UNIFICATION OF THE CONGRESS

Gandhi called off the non-cooperation movement abruptly following the unfortunate violence at Chauri Chaura. It was even condemned by many of his most loyal followers as a historic blunder, with the likes of Sri CR Das among them. Gandhi's arrest in 1922 was the beginning of a stormy period for the Indian National Congress. Two factions under CR Das and Chakraborty Rajagopalachari gathered force, and the entire coherent fabric of the INC was on the point of breaking down, thereby bringing down the impetus of the Indian nationalist movement and also tarnishing the image of the Congress in the public eye. Gandhi tried hard to bridge the differences. He undertook a fast in a bid to unite the warring factions. However, success was limited and Gandhi had to come back and hold the reins in order to guide Congress in the proper direction.

Gandhi returned from a brief hibernation following his imprisonment and in the Calcutta Conference of 1928, announced his arrival with aplomb, daring the British government with a one year deadline to free India. He was influenced by the enthusiasm of younger Congressmen like Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhash Chandra Bose. The government did not respond and the INC celebrated Indian independence on 26th January, 1930, following the proposals undertaken Lahore Congress the year before. The Civil Disobedience movement ensued with Gandhi at the helm, defying government orders.

GANDHI AND THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS THROUGH THE NINETEEN THIRTIES

The thirties were a particularly important and significant decade in the development of the Indian National Congress and Gandhi's role became central towards determining the course of

action in these years. The Civil Disobedience movement was strong enough to lead the British authorities to cower down under pressure and take steps to initiate the first round table conference leading to the Gandhi-Irwin pact. Gandhi, on the terms laid down by the pact reached England in 1931 as the sole representative of the Indian National Congress to participate in the Second Round Table conference, where he delivered an invigorating speech, exposing the brutalities of the British rule in India. The conference predictably failed. The British government thereafter indulged in a divide and rule policy with the introduction of the Communal Award rule. Gandhi's innate belief in secularism was terribly hurt and he led Congress towards a full-fledged revolution.

Gandhi's particular cause of pain was the breakdown within the Hindu community on lines of caste and creed, which was absolutely antagonistic to his satyagraha ideals. The highlight of the movement was the fast until death that he undertook on 20th September, 1932. His condition deteriorated and soon the warring factions were forced to come to terms of commonality. There would be a common election for the Hindus with the harijans and the other backward categories having seats reserved for them. The meeting with Ambedkar was successful, a great cessation was avoided at Gandhi's own initiative and the British policy of divide and rule suffered a setback. The elections proved a great success for Gandhi and the Indian National Congress that worked under his leadership.

THE SECOND WORLD WAR AND GANDHI'S INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

The Second World War that took the entire Europe by storm placed a new dilemma for the Indian National Congress. The Congressmen were not very sure about which side to take. First, the Indian National Congress, much under the influence of Gandhi preferred to steer clear of what they thought was an exclusively European problem and a fight between imperialism and fascism. Both the sides were equally degrading to the authorities of Indian National Congress. However, there were divisions within the Congress, and it was gradually becoming difficult even for Gandhi to harness the contrasting ideologies under a single rein.

The deadlock was broken when the British government promised to grant India self rule in return for their support of the British forces in the world war. Congress complied and India extended its support to the British. However, the British authorities were in no mood to keep its promise, leading Gandhi to give the clarion call for satyagraha. He attacked the British through an article in 'Harijan', and requested them to leave India. Finally, the Quit India movement was formally launched in 1942, with Gandhi inviting the nationalists to embark in a program of 'do or die'. The revolution arrived at a fever pitch, as did the communal breakdown of the Indian social structure. It was a time of deep spiritual trauma for Gandhi. The goal of complete freedom of India was at the threshold, but at the cost of something that his secular ideology could never accept-partition.

Mahatma Gandhi's association with the Indian National Congress ushered in one of the most glorious periods of Indian nationalist movement. Throughout the troubled times, Gandhi, either in the capacity of the president or as a guiding force within the party structure successfully steered India towards its much cherished dream of freedom, that was ultimately realized in 1947.

THE CRISIS IN INDIAN NATIONALISM

THE Indian National Congress, the political organ of the extremist party, which met in full session during the week of Christmas, is confronted with a dilemma on whose solution its future existence as a fighting body will depend. Violence or non-violence; continued leadership of the masses or surrender to the Bureaucracy,—these are the two horns on which the delegates to the Congress found themselves impaled.

The present crisis, which is the outcome of the Non-cooperation campaign of the extremist nationalists and the policy of repression recently adopted by the Government, has been brought to a head by the visit of the Prince of Wales to India and the startling demonstration of power afforded by the boycott of the royal visitor and the more or less complete *Hartal*, or general strike, of the Indian people, which greeted his arrival in every large city.

The new Viceroy, Lord Reading, who was sent out to India to control the most difficult and delicate situation in the history

of that country, announced his advent as the coming of a rule of "justice, law and order." The non-violent Non-co-operation campaign, headed by Mr. Gandhi and the Congress Party, for the attainment of Swaraj, or Self-Government, was in full swing, and the Viceroy adopted a policy of watchful waiting for the first six months, in order to study the situation thoroughly before venturing upon a positive line of action. It was the opinion of the Anglo-Indian bureaucracy that the movement would run itself into the ground and die of its own contradictions, and the many mistakes and failures of the tactics adopted seemed to justify this expectation.

The boycott of the army, the schools and of Government offices and titles had, on the whole, proved abortive, despite some distinguished exceptions; while the boycott of foreign cloth and the revival of hand-spinning and weaving was, on the face of it, an economic impossibility bound to end in failure. The concrete achievements of the Non-co-operation movement were few, but important, and ignored by the Bureaucracy until too late to prevent them. They consisted in the successful collection of a National Fund of one crore rupees (equivalent to one million pounds), the registration of ten million members of the Congress Party, and the building-up of a nation-wide organisation for propaganda purposes, which the Nationalist Movement had never before had, and whose all-embracing activities swept the great mass of the people, intellectuals, petty bourgeoisie, peasants and city—proletariat alike,—within its scope.

The greatest unifying force for all these heterogeneous elements of discontent was, in the early days of the movement, the personality of Mr. Gandhi, whose Tolstoyan philosophy of non-resistance, together with his stainless personal life and long record of public service, endeared him to all classes of the population alike. It was to the "Mahatma" or Great Soul, as Mr. Gandhi was universally known, that the astute Lord Reading addressed himself in his first effort to sound the depth of the movement and to check its rampant career. Mr. Gandhi's ready consent to travel to Simla for an interview with the Viceroy of the Government, which he and his followers had so uncompromisingly boycotted, proved him to be more of a saint than a politician, and it was inevitable that in this first contest between the Non-co-operators and the

authorities, that the former should be worsted. Lord Reading obtained from the Mahatma a promise that the two Ali brothers would make a public apology for certain alleged speeches inciting the Indian people to violence,—and the Mahatma received the assurance that, for the time being, the Government would drop its intended prosecution of the two brothers for seditious utterances.

The apology was duly delivered and heralded to India and to the world as the capitulation to legal authority of the two hottest defenders of Indian Nationalism. It is hard to say who suffered more in prestige by this unfortunate bargain with the "satanic" Government—Mr. Gandhi or the Ali brothers, who were accused by their opponents and followers, alike of compromise and cowardice. It was the first triumph of the Government, and Lord Reading saw his way clear ahead of him.

Mr. Gandhi frankly admitted he had made another "Himalayan" mistake in his zeal for peace, and the Ali brothers, loyal to their leader, but resentful of the charge of cowardice, started a campaign of invectives against the Government and invited their own arrest. The public mind having been prepared for this eventuality to two of their dearest idols, and Mr. Gandhi having abjured everyone to abstain from all public manifestations or show of resistance, the Government proceeded to arrest the Ali brothers and five other prominent Non-co-operators, and then stayed its hand to see the effect of this move. What would be the response of the Mussulman population to this blow aimed at their leaders?

The baffling quiet which prevailed all over India gave satisfaction alike to the Government and the Non-co-operators. Aside from a few protest meetings, an occasional strike and several street demonstrations, there was nothing to show that two of India's most forceful and popular heroes had been arrested and convicted on ordinary criminal charges to two years' imprisonment. The Government argued that if it was so easy to cut off the heads of the movement, the body could be easily crippled. Mr. Gandhi, on the other hand, proclaimed the national calm as the triumph of soul-force over violence, and the Working Committee of the National Congress announced the programme of Civil Disobedience, including non-payment of taxes and a national

boycott of the visit of the Prince of Wales to India, scheduled for November. More arrests followed as a matter of course, together with the prosecution and penalising of nationalist journals for alleged seditious utterances. Non-co-operators went to prison unresisting and rejoicing, and new ones sprang to supplant them. Civil Disobedience, Boycott of foreign cloth, and a National *Hartal*, or general strike, on the landing of the Prince of Wales, became the popular slogans of the hour. The whole country became a seething volcano of unrest and incipient trouble. Officialdom, at first nonplussed, advised the postponement of the prince's visit, and it was rumoured that ill-health would prevent his projected trip to India. The open jubilation of the Non-co-operators, and the increased intensity, of their campaign, changed the official mind. It was declared that the royal visit would take place.

It is not by chance that the Prince of Wales, the darling of the royal family and symbol of Britain's majesty, has been thrown to the angry tigers of Indian Nationalism. The nature of his reception would be a good gauge of the real strength of the movement and of the hold enjoyed by the Congress leaders over the masses. The infinitesimal chance that the Prince would be assassinated by some terrorist, though minimised to almost zero by the elaborate precautions taken, would be run,—the British bourgeoisie is implacable when its interests are at stake. This feeling is well reflected by the Bombay correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* who wrote:

> *The Prince's visit is not without risks. The days are gone when a royal visit to India was merely a delightful ceremony. In every municipality, the exact measure of hospitality to be shown has been hotly debated. Every act of homage is a real bending of the political will. The warmth of the welcome extended to the Prince will be the gauge of Indian desire for the British connection.*

The arrival of the Prince of Wales in Bombay on November 17 was heralded to the world through the medium of the Press as the failure of Non-co-operation and the triumph of India's loyalty to the British Crown. First accounts conveyed glittering descriptions of the magnificent displays and entertainments given at public expense for the Prince's reception. But gradually the news leaked out that beyond the area where soldiers and machine-

guns ensured the peaceful progress of the Heir to the Throne, there was serious trouble with the population of Bombay. Riots broke out in every part of the city, strikes were declared in all big industries, and the excited and angry populace fell to looting and incendiarism, unmindful of Mr. Gandhi's prayerful injunction for perfect peace.

The Governor issued a Proclamation on the 16th and 17th that "the Government would use all its powers for the maintenance of law and order." According to the *Manchester Guardian*, "life in the city was dislocated for four days." The list of casualties on the day the Prince landed include 83 police wounded, 53 rioters killed and 298 wounded, together with 341 arrests; 160 tramcars were damaged or destroyed; 135 shops were looted and 4 burned down. On the same day, Calcutta celebrated the arrival of the Prince on Indian soil by declaring a complete *Hartal* for twenty-four hours, and similar action was taken in cities all over India. The spectacular nature of the Calcutta strike is testified to by the *Times* correspondent, who writes:

> *From early morning, Congress and Caliphate volunteers appeared on the streets, and, it is no exaggeration to say, took possession of the whole city. The bazaars were closed. Tramcars were stopped. Taxis were frightened off the streets and horse vehicles were nowhere to be seen. There was little open violence, not even a brickbat was thrown at the armoured cars that patrolled the streets. The police looked on and did nothing. The control of the city passed for the whole day into the hands of the Volunteers. At nightfall, electric lights were cut off, and the streets were silent, dark, and deserted. It was like a city of the dead.*

Here was a startling manifestation of national solidarity that gave the Government pause for thought. It was an imposing demonstration of the popular will obeying the behests of its leaders. In Ireland people are used to such spectacles, but in India! In the temporary lull that preceded the bursting of the storm, the still, small voice of Mahatma Gandhi was raised crying piteously to Heaven for pardon for the blood that had been shed in Bombay, and calling upon those who had sinned to repent, as he did, by fasting for twenty-four hours out of every week. Poor, misguided, deluded Mahatma Gandhi! In his hesitations and vacillations and

hurried flights froth the diplays of mass energy to the retreat of his own conscience is summed up the peculiar predicament of the Indian National Congress as a whole, which is being ground beneath the upper and the nether millstones of Government repression and seething popular unrest, which must find an outlet in violence, unless its economic distress which lies at the bottom of its discontent finds some relief.

The iron heel of authority came down upon the country instantaneously. The Government had had sufficient insight into the depth and strength of the national movement, and it decided to cut at the roots as well as to strike off the heads. Not only was it desired to check the progress of the Non-cooperation movement and to insure a welcome to the Prince,—it was intended also to paralyse the holding of the Indian National Congress, scheduled to meet at Ahmedabad on December 24, at which time Mr. Gandhi had definitely promised to announce the advent of his long-heralded but slightly chimerical Swaraj. More than 500 arrests were made in Calcutta alone. The recruiting and organising of Congress and Caliphate volunteers was declared to be illegal. The principal districts of India were placed under Section 2 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, which prohibits "unlawful associations" to such an extent that three persons meeting together in one place are liable to arrest.

Naturally, the various Provincial Congress Committees meeting throughout India became unlawful associations, and their members were arrested wholesale. All the principal leaders of the Congress (including its President, C. R. Das; its Secretary, Motilal Nehru; and Lajpat Rai, the fiery leader of the Punjab) have been arrested. The arrest of students and working men acting as pickets, volunteers or strikers, has been legion. The Viceroy stated impressively that "the Government of India are very conscious of their power and their strength. Recent events have made it imperative that the full strength of the Government should be exerted for vindicating the law and preserving order." Not alone men, but women as well, have fallen under the official ban, and, according to the London *Nation*, "Bengali ladies have been taking active part in the agitation, and some of them have been lodged in gaol. It would be difficult to exaggerate the social sensation in India caused by Indian ladies being led off to cells." Amid this

impressive display of force, the Prince continued on his flowery path northward through the various Indian provinces, receiving everywhere the same official welcome which sought to veil the popular disaffection beneath. In the protected Native States he received the warmest reception, thereby demonstrating the British wisdom in perpetuating these feudal puppets as props to their own rule. But his emergence into British India once more was like a cold douche. Allahabad, the capital of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, greeted him, according to the *Manchester Guardian*, "with what truth compels the admission of as the most effective *Hertal* yet experienced. The streets were liberally festooned and garlanded, but entirely deserted." "The silence of Allahabad," declares the *Times*, "represents the first occasion on which the fomenters of passive hostility were really successful." It was an effective answer to the Government repressions that were rapidly flooding the gaols of every Indian city.

The arrival of the Prince in Calcutta was to be the acid test, for Bengal has always been the hotbed of rebellion. Four armoured cruisers were anchored outside the harbour, and special battalions of troops were posted in every part of the city, which assumed the appearance of an armed camp. The Prince was to arrive on December 24, the same day on which the Congress would open in Ahmedabad, and in anticipation of his coming, the majority of the workers and the students went on strike, while the lawyers suspended their practice. Arrests reached such a degree that the general public began to protest. Lawyers of the High Court passed a resolution demanding the repeal of the Criminal Law Amendment Act; business men of the United Provinces issued a statement to the Government that the present policy only added fresh recruits to the movement; members of the provincial legislative councils began to resign, and four members of the Imperial Legislative Assembly addressed the Government, urging it to call a halt to futile repression, to formulate some constructive policy which would recognise the amazingly rapid changes occurring in India, and to call a round table conference of all shades of political thought to find a way out of the present deadlock.

Mr. Gandhi, despite repeated pleas to be arrested, continued in freedom, and on the eve of the opening of the Congress, which he declared must be held at any cost and despite the arrest of all

its leaders unless the Government dissolve it by force, he issued a Manifesto which, among other things, stated:

> *Lord Reading must understand that the Non-co-operators are at war with the Government. We want to overthrow the Government and compel its submission to the people's will. We shall have to stagger humanity, even as South Africa and Ireland, with this exception—we will rather spill our own blood, not that of our opponents. This is a fight to a finish.*

This, then, is the situation in India on the eve of the assembling of the National Congress—the gravest situation in living memory. What is the Congress to do? Its tactics of non-violence have come to an end, the mass-energy on which the strength of the Congress movement has rested can no longer be controlled in a crisis, as events in Bombay and elsewhere testify. At the same time, the masses are completely unarmed; they are hopelessly unready for an armed contest for supremacy. If the Congress persists in its doctrine of Soul Force, it will lose the support of the militant workers and peasants, who have dot out of bounds and whose desperate economic condition renders some immediate and practical solution imperative. The Indian working class has lent itself already long enough to Mr. Gandhi's quixotic chasing of windmills. Non-violence, non-resistance, Soul-Force, boycotts and strikes in the National Cause for a Swaraj that is indefinitely postponed, have weakened their faith in the Prophet, and they find themselves in no way better off.

In all their circumlocutions and invectives against foreign rule, the Congress leaders have forgotten or neglected utterly to mention the economic betterment of the Indian workers and peasants, whose energetic support of the Congress Programme of boycott and civil disobedience by riots, strikes, imprisonment and loss of life has constituted the backbone and real strength of the movement. Such systematic repression as the Government of India has launched upon can kill any movement that does not spring from the vital economic needs and desires of the people. If the Congress persists in its present tactics, it will find itself divested of the popular support that gave it such powerful impetus and power, and it will be reduced once more to its former status of a debating society on constitutional progress, by India's

discontented lawyers, doctors and petty-bourgeois intelligentsia. The masses, forced asunder from the political movement by Government persecution and their own waning interest, will take up the economic struggle in good earnest on the purely economic field, leaving politics alone, like the burned child which dreads the fire. Such a movement is already lender way in India. In the first week of December, 1921, the Second All-India Trade Union Congress was held in Jharria, a little town in the coalfields of Bengal. The Government, busy with its persecutions of the Nationalists, had no time or energy to interfere with it, despite the petition of various Employers' Associations to prohibit the holding of the Congress.

A great coal-strike was in progress, involving some 50,000 miners, numbers of whom attended the Congress in a body, in addition to the regularly constituted delegates, who numbered ten thousand. Something over a million, organised workers were represented from about a hundred different unions. The Secretary of the Trade Union Congress, Mr. Chaman Lal, drew a picture of the economic condition of the Indian working-class, comparing it with European conditions, and declared before the assembled delegates that the continuance of such conditions meant the coming of Bolshevism to India.

If the Government and the employers refused to make concessions to labour, the latter would take matters into its own hands. Referring to the political struggle raging throughout India, Chaman Lal declared that only by the help of the organised working-class, India would attain Swaraj within ten years. Resolutions of sympathy for the Russian famine, and a call to the organised working-class of the entire world to abolish wars by international action, were adopted. The most significant outcome of the Congress was the sudden agreement of the coal-mine owners to negotiate with the striking workers as to an increase in wages, a shorter working-day, better housing, medical attendance, etc.,—matters which heretofore they bad refused to discuss.

The All-India Trade Union Congress, which held its first session a year ago, has already become a power in the world of organised labour in India. All the class-conscious elements of the Indian proletariat are included within its ranks.

It is fighting for frankly material things, well within the comprehension of the simple, ignorant and oppressed people who belong to it,—better wages, fewer hours, decent housing, sanitation and medical help in time of sickness, with accident, old-age and maternity benefits for workers. There are no political planks in its programme, but the still rebellious working-class, fired with the national enthusiasm, have not yet forgotten the fabulous Swaraj promised them by their Mahatma. The great question at issue now is, will the centre of gravity of the Indian struggle be shifted from the political to the purely economic field, from the Indian National Congress to the All-India Trade Union Congress, or will the political leaders rise to the occasion and adopt such a programme in the National Congress as will keep the Indian masses behind it in its political fight, by including their economic grievances? The resolutions adopted in the sessions of the National Congress do not touch upon the vital question of the workers' economic needs.

The 12,000 delegates and visitors, clad in homespun Khaddar and white "Gandhi caps," eschewed chairs and squatted upon the floor of the huge Pandal or tent, while their leader, the saintly Mahatma, simply dressed in a homespun loin-cloth, issued his appeals for peace from the top of a table upon which he sat cross-legged. His resolution, calling for "aggressive civil disobedience to all Government laws and institutions; for non-violence; for the continuance of public meetings throughout India despite the Government prohibition, and for all Indians to offer themselves peacefully for arrest by joining the Volunteer Corps," was carried with but ten dissentient votes.

The Congress appointed Gandhi as its sole executive authority, with power to name his own successor in case he is arrested, but declared that peace with the Government cannot be concluded without the previous consent of the Congress.

A motion introduced by Hazrat Mohani, for complete independence outside the British Empire, to be attained by all "possible and proper," instead of by all "legitimate and peaceful" means, was opposed by Mr. Gandhi on the ground that it would alienate the sympathy of the Moderates, and the resolution was lost, although a strong minority voted in its favour. "The unity of all classes depends on non-violence," said Mr. Gandhi, who seeks to combine Moderates and Extremists, the Indian bourgeoisie and exploited proletariat, or a common but vague programme of political Swaraj. Mr. Gandhi, who is to-day undoubtedly the Dictator of the Indian Nationalist Movement, will end by falling between two stools, since he cannot for ever, sit on both.

The Indian masses demand economic betterment, and their rebellious spirit cannot be contained much longer within the limits of a peaceful political programme which avoids all mention of their economic needs. Already the energies of the more class-conscious are being deflected towards the growing Trade Unions and Peasants' Co-operatives. The Congress will lose in this element its only revolutionary basis, because the handful of discontented intellectuals who compose the Extremist Party represents neither the interests of the moderate bourgeoisie nor of the conservative landholding class. The recent Governmental repressions have temporarily rallied all classes on the basis of national feeling, and have led even the Moderates to protest and to demand a round-table conference of all shades of opinion, where some, agreement by compromise can be reached. Certain Trade Union leaders also urge such a Conference on the plea that Labour is getting out of hand. The Viceroy agreed, on condition that the Extremists cease their Boycott and other activities and that both sides call a truce pending negotiations.

Pundit Malaviya, who represents the Right Wing of the Congress Party, proposed a resolution in the Congress to participate in a round-table conference for the settlement of grievances. Gandhi opposed making the first overtures, and the motion was defeated, but "the door to negotiations was still left open." "We will talk with the Viceroy only as equals, not as suppliants," Gandhi declared, and added, "I am a man of peace, but not of peace at any price—only of that peace which will enable us to stand up to the world as free men." A definite refusal to compromise, on the part of the Extremists, will mean continued repression by the Government and the alienation of Moderate sympathy; consent to a Conference, on the other hand, means compromise with the Government and alienation of the masses. Which will Mr. Gandhi, Dictator of the Indian National Congress, decide to do?

4

The Birth of A Movement

"... I am an Indian and owe duty to my work and all my countrymen. Whether I am a Hindu or a Mohammedan, a Parsi, a Christian, or of any other creed, I am above all an Indian. Our country is India and our nationality is Indian."

DADABHAI NAOROJI, LAHORE, 1893

The Indian National Congress (INC) — perhaps the largest and oldest democratic organisation in the world — was born as a movement that embraced all peoples, cultures and communities into its fold in its fight for freedom from alien domination. The early Congress consisted of the Moderates who adopted non-confrontational methods and sought to make the provincial legislatures more representative.

Gradually, however, the repressive policies of the British government aroused intense opposition and strengthened national sentiments. Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Pal, who constituted the Extremist triumvirate called Lal-Bal-Pal, advocated the policy of swadeshi (boycott of foreign goods) and national education. The Home Rule Movement started by Tilak and Annie Besant in Maharashtra and Chennai in 1916, politicised new social classes, paving the way for the agitations launched by Mahatma Gandhi. Tilak's catch phrase, "Freedom is my birthright, and I shall have it," had nationalist sentiments soaring to new heights.

A NEW ERA BEGINS

Mahatma Gandhi's entry into active politics in 1919 began a new era in Indian national politics. The Jallianwala Bagh massacre

and the atrocities perpetuated in Punjab following the incident, convinced the Congress to give up the old methods. At a special Congress session in Calcutta in 1920, Gandhiji decided to start the Non-Cooperation Movement, strictly adhering all the while to the principles of ahimsa (non-violence).

Leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose changed the ideological climate of the national movement by disseminating the ideals of socialism. The Congress became a genuinely revolutionary organisation and a mass movement.

THE DEMAND FOR PURNA SWARAJ

The All India Congress Committee (AICC) was formed in 1929 to launch a civil disobedience programme which included the non-payment of taxes. January 26, 1930, was declared Independence Day and the Independence Pledge, which would be repeated year after year, was taken by the Indian people.

The Satyagraha Era began with the Dandi March against the Salt Tax. Before his arrest, Gandhiji exhorted Indians to unity: "Hindus, Muslims, Parsis and Christians, all should heartily embrace one another."

By the time the Civil Disobedience movement came to an end in April 1934, the Congress had substantially succeeded in lowering the import of British goods to India. The seeds of another social revolution had also been sown: the emancipation of women through their active role in the struggle for freedom.

Annie Besant, Sarojini Naidu and Nellie Sengupta were presidents of various Congress sessions, and an inspiration to their contemporaries.

THE QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT

The non-violent Quit India movement was launched in July 1942. A resolution passed by the AICC in August of the same year demanded the end of British rule in India. Speaking on the resolution after it was passed, Gandhiji said that he wanted freedom immediately: "I am today a free man and will no longer depend on you. Every true Congressman or woman will join the struggle with an inflexible determination not to remain alive to see the

country in bondage and slavery. We shall either free India or die in the attempt."

The events that followed forced the government to reach a settlement. However, the best efforts of the Congress could not prevent the division of the country on communal lines. The Indian Independence Act was passed by the British Parliament in July, 1947, and on August 14, M.A. Jinnah was declared governor-general of Pakistan.

THE DAWN OF FREEDOM

The bid to fragment India led to communal strife throughout the country. This 'crisis in India's soul', as Jawaharlal Nehru described it, not only affected its direct victims, but shook the cherished ideals on which the entire structure of national life was based.

Midnight, August 14-15, 1947: The sacrifices of the millions who suffered and died for the country finally bore fruit. India became an independent nation.

Moving the resolution prescribing an oath for the members in the Constituent Assembly, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of Independent India, declared: "Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge... The service of India means the service of the millions who suffer. It means the ending of poverty and ignorance and disease and inequality of opportunity."

FROM SWARAJ TO SATELLITES

Jawaharlal Nehru came to symbolise the best of the Congress culture in many ways. With him, at the helm of affairs, the Congress was able to build a national ethos based on the principles of socialism and democracy. For a country with a long history of tribal, feudal and colonial authoritarianism, the introduction of democracy meant a great leap into the future. Nehru played his most creative role in the socio-economic transformation of India. His understanding of global issues promoted India's image across the world as an anti-imperialist, anti-colonial, anti-fascist and anti-racist nation.

THE CHALLENGES OF MODERNISATION

The challenges of modernisation began with Gandhiji's determination to wipe every tear from every eye. Having galvanised the nation into fighting for its freedom, the leaders of the Congress went on to create the infrastructure that would lead India into a new age of development.

Later Congress Prime Ministers, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi, continued development projects related to science and technology, agriculture, education, eradication of poverty and unemployment, and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The Congress has always advocated the process of change and growth, yet it is deeply rooted in the values that have shaped the country's culture.

THE CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE

When pre-Independence Congress leaders spoke of *swaraj*, the ideal they strove towards was a nation whose citizens lived in unity and had equality of opportunity. Now, over a century later, its mass base involving people from every caste, class and creed of society, accounts for its long-standing dominance of the Indian political scene since Independence.

5

Looking Back at the Battle of Freedom

COMING OF GANDHIJI

When Gandhiji entered the Congress organization for the first time he immediately brought about complete change in its constitution. He made it a democratic and a mass based organization. Democratic it had been previously also but it had so far been limited in franchise and restricted to the upper classes. Now the peasants rolled in and in its new garb, it began to assume the look of a vast agrarian organization with a strong sprinkling of the middle-classes. This agrarian character was to grow. Industrial workers also came in but as individuals and not in their separate organized capacity.

NEW TECHNIQUE

Action was to be the basis and objective of this organization, action based on peaceful methods. Thus far the alternatives had been just talking and passing resolutions, or terroristic activity. Both of these were set aside and terrorism was especially condemned as opposed to the basic policy of the Congress. A new technique of action was evolved which though perfectly peaceful yet involved nonsubmission to what was considered wrong and as a consequence a willing acceptance of the pain and suffering involved in this Gandhi was an odd kind of pacifist for he was an activist full of dynamic energy. There was no submission in him to fate or anything that be considered evil; he was full to resistance, though this was peaceful and courteous.

The call of action was two fold. There was of course the action involved in challenging and resisting foreign rule; there was also the action which led us to fight our own social evils. Apart from the fundamental objective of the Congress-the freedom of India- and the method of peaceful action, the principal planks of the Congress were national unity, which involved the solution of the minority problems, and the raising of the depressed classes and the ending of the curse of the untouchability.

Realizing that the main props of British rule were fear, prestige, the co-operation, willing or unwilling, of the people, and contain classes whose vested interests were centered in British rule, Gandhi attacked these foundations.

Titles were to be given up and though the title-holders responded to this only in small measure, the popular respect for these British-giving titles disappeared and they became symbols of degradation. New standards and values were set up and the pomp and splendour of the Viceregal court and the Princes, which used to impress so much suddenly appeared supremely ridiculous and vulgar and rather shameful, surrounded as they were by the poverty and misery of the people. Rich men were not so anxious to flaunt their riches; outwardly at least many of them adopted simpler ways and in their dress became almost indistinguishable from the humbler folk.

The older leaders of the Congress nurtured in a different and more quiescent tradition, did not take easily to these new ways and were disturbed by the upsurge of the masses. Yet so powerful was the wave of feeling and sentiment that swept through the country, that some of that intoxication filled them also. A very few fell away and among them was Mr. M A Jinnah. He left the Congress not because of any difference of opinion on the Hindu Muslim question but because he could not adapt himself to the new and more advanced ideology, and even more so because he disliked the crowds of ill-dressed people, talking in Hindustani, who filled the Congress room.

For some years he felt completely out of the picture and even decided to leave India for good. He settled down in England and spent several years there.

ANTITHESIS OF QUIETISM

It is said, and I think with truth, that the Indian habit of mind is essentially one of quietism. Perhaps old races develop that attitude to life; a long tradition of philosophy also leads to it. And yet Gandhi, a typical product of India represented the very antithesis of quietism. He had been a demon of energy and action, a hustler, and a man who not only drove himself but drove others. He had done more than anyone I knew to fight and change the quietism of the Indian people.

He sent us to the villages, and the countryside hummed with the activity of innumerable messengers of the new gospel of action. The peasant was shaken up and he began to emerge from his quiescent shell.

The effect on us was different but equally far-reaching, for we saw, for the first time as it were, the villager in the intimacy of his mud-hut and with the stark shadow of hunger always pursuing him. We learnt our Indian economics more from these visits than from books and learned discourses. The emotional experience we had already undergone was emphasized and confirmed and henceforward there could be no going back for us to our old life or our old standards, howsoever much our views might change subsequently.

Gandhi held strong views on economic, social and other matter. He did not try to impose all of these on the Congress, though he continued to develop his ideas, and sometimes in the process varied them, through his writings. But some he tried to push into the Congress. He proceeded cautiously for he wanted to carry the people with him.

Sometimes he went too far ahead of the Congress and had to retrace his steps. Not many accepted his views in their entirety; some disagreed with that fundamental outlook. But many accepted them in the modified form they came to the Congress as being suited to the circumstances then existing. In two respects, the background of his thought had a vague but considerable influence, the fundamental test of everything was how far it benefited the masses, and the means were always important and could not be ignored even though the end in view was right, for the means governed the end and varied it.

BELIEF IN MORAL LAW

Gandhi was essentially a man of religion, a Hindu to the innermost depths of his being, and yet his conception of religion had nothing to do with any dogma or custom or ritual. It was basically concerned with his form belief in the moral law, which he calls the Law of Truth or Love. Truth and non-violence appeared to him to be the same thing or different aspects of one and the same thing, and used these words almost interchangeably. Claiming to understand the spirit of Hinduism, he rejected every test or practice which did not fit in with his idealist interpretation of what it should be calling it an interpolation or a subsequent accretion. "I decline to be a slave'. He once said to precedents or practice I cannot understand or defend on a moral basis.

And so in practice he was singularly free to take the path of his choice, to change and adapt himself, to develop his philosophy of life and action, subject only to the overriding consideration of the moral law as he conceived this to be. Whether that philosophy was right or wrong may be argued. But he insisted on applying the same fundamental yard-stick to everything, and himself specially. In politics, as in other aspects of life, this could creat difficulties for the average person, and often misunderstanding. But no difficulty made him swerve from the straight line of his choosing, though within limits he continually adapted himself to a changing situation. Every reform that he suggested, every advice that he gave to others, the straightway applied to himself. He always began with himself and his words and actions fitted into each other like a glove on the hand. And so, whatever happened, he never lost his integrity and there was always an organic completeness about his life and work. Even in his apparent failures, he seemed to grow in stature.

INDIA OF HIS DREAMS

What was his idea of India which he was setting out to mould according to his own wishes and ideals? I shall work for an India in which the poorest shall feel that it their country, in whose making they have an effective voice, and India in which there shall be no high class and low class of people, an India in which all communities shall live in perfect harmony… There can be no

room in such an India for the curse of untouchability or the curse of intoxicating drinks and drugs… Women will enjoy the same rights as men… This is the India of my dreams.

Proud of his Hindu inheritance as he was, he tried to give Hinduism a kind of universal attire and included all religious within the fold of truth. He refused to narrow his cultural inheritance. Indian culture, he wrote 'is neither Hindu, Islamic nor any other' wholly. It is a fusion of all'. Again he said: I want the culture of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any. I refuse to live in other peoples' houses as an interloper, a beggar or a slave'. Influenced by modern thought currents, he never let go off his roots and clung to them.

IDENTIFICATION WITH MASSES

And so he set about to restore the spiritual unity of the people and to break the barrier between the small Westernized group at the top and the masses, to discover the living elements in the old roots and to build them, to waken these masses out of their stupor and static condition and make them dynamic. In his single-track and yet many-sided nature, the dominating impression that one gathered was his identification with the masses, a community of spirit with them, an amazing sense of unity with the dispossessed and poverty-stricken not only of India but of the would. Even religion as everything else, took second place to his passion to raise these submerged people. "A semi-starved nation can have neither religion nor art nor organization. "Whatever can be useful to starving millions in beautiful to my mind. Let us given today first the vital things of life, and all the graces and ornaments of life will follow… I want art and literature that can speak to millions'. These unhappy dispossessed million haunted him and everything seemed to revolve round them. For millions it is an eternal vigil or an eternal trance. His ambition, he said, was to wipe every tear from every eye.'

It is not surprising that this astonishingly vital man, full of self-confidence and an unusual kind of power, standing for equality and freedom for each individual, but measuring all this in terms of the poorest, fascinated the masses of India and attracted them

like a magnet. He seemed to them to link up the past with the future and to make the dismal present appear just as a stepping stone to the future of life and hope. And not the masses only but intellectuals and other also, though their minds were often troubled and confused and the change-over for them from the habits of a lifetime was more difficult. Thus he effected a vast psychological revolution not only among those who followed his lead but also among his opponents and those many neutrals we could not make up their minds what to think and what to do.

Congress was dominated by Gandhi and yet it was a peculiar domination, for the Congress was an active, rebellious, many sided organization, full of variety of opinion, and not easily led this way or that. Often Gandhi tones down his position to meet the wishes of others, sometimes he accepted even an adverse decision. On some vital matters for him, he was adamant, and on more than one occasion there came a break between him and the Congress. But always he was the symbol of India's independence and militant nationalism, the unyielding opponent of all those who sought to enslave, her, and it was as such a symbol that people gathered to him and accepted his lead, even though they disagreed with him on other matters. They did not always accept that lead when there was no active struggle going on, but when the struggle was inevitable that symbol became all important, and everything else was secondary.

CONGRESS TAKES TO GANDHIAN PATH

Thus in 1920 the Indian National Congress, and to a large extent the country, took to his new and unexplored path and came into conflict repeatedly with the British Power. That conflict was inherent both in these methods and the new situation that had arisen yet at the back of all this was not political tactics and maneuvering but the desire to strengthen the Indian people, for by that strength alone could they achieve independence and retain it. Civil disobedience struggles came one after other, involving enormous suffering, but that suffering was self-invited and therefore strength-giving, not the kind which overwhelms the unwilling, leading to despair and defeatism. The unwilling also suffered, caught in the wide net of fierce governmental repression,

and even the willing sometimes broke up and collapsed. But many remained true and steadfast, harder for all the experience they had undergone.

At no time, even when its fortunes were low, did Congress surrender to superior might or submit to foreign authority. It remained the symbol of India's passionate desire for independence and her will to resist alien domination. It was because of this that vast numbers of the Indian people sympathized with it and looked to it for leadership, even though many of them were too weak and feeble, or so circumstanced as to be unable to do anything themselves. The Congress was a party in some ways; it has also been a joint platform for several parties; but essentially it was something much more, for it represented the innermost desire of the vast numbers of our people.

SATYAGRAHA LABORATORIES OF MAHATMA GANDHI

Till the advent of Gandhiji into the political arena in India, the Indian nationalists had visualized only two courses of action to lead India towards self-government. One, adopted by the Liberals and more or less by the extremists also, was to pass resolutions, petitioning, so criticizing or condemning Government, as also to agitate and focus public opinion. The other, adopted by the younger section styled "Revolutionary" was a resort to the bomb and other methods of violence. The former was ineffective and the latter was possible only for a few on account of the immense potentiality of the Government for counter-violence and repression, as was evidenced by the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. The young mind of the country was surging with discontent accompanied by a feeling of disappointment and frustration.

Gandhiji had tried quite successfully his method of direct action first called "passive resistence" and subsequently described as "Satyagraha" in South Africa. It was, however, feared that what was possible in South Africa on account of the smallness of the population there, might not be possible in India with a vast population and diverse elements consisting of different religions, provinces, creeds, languages, interests, etc. Gandhiji, however, has abundant faith in the righteousness and the adaptability of his method under Indian conditions.

To Bihar, of all the proviness in India, belongs the honour of having served as the first laboratory for Mahatma Gandhi for his various experiments which were latterly to find there application in different phases of his campaign for national regeneration of the country.

CHAMPARAN

The 10th day of April of the year 1917 will be marked as a red letter day in the annals of Bihar for it was on that day that the architect of India's freedom set foot upon its soil in response to the call of submerged humanity. The European planters, considered to be the powers behind the British throne, from whose pooression Gandhiji came to release the dumb driven millions of Champaran, rallied in a solid phalanx to obstruct and oppose him, The Statesman, the Englishman and the Pioneer, the powerful organs of the Anglo-Indian interests, opened their broadsides upon him. The eyes of the whole of India were fixed on Bihar, where the first round of the struggle for India's freedom had started, for it soon became manifest that the fight for emancipation of the peasants of Champaran meant battling not only against the European planters but also the white bureaucracy of the land.

Acting under the instructions of the Commissioner of the Tirhut Division, the District Magistrate of Champaran ordered Mahatmaji to leave the district at once. How could the saviour respect this fiat by giving up his mission? He was hauled up in court for defiance of orders. In the course of his statement to the court he said, "As a law-abiding citizen my first instinct would be, as it was, to obey the order served upon me. But I could not do so without doing violence to my sense of duty to those for whom I came. I feel that I could just now serve them by remaining in their midst. I could not therefore voluntarily retire. Amidst this conflict of duty I could only throw the responsibility of removing me from on the administration.

It is remarkable that it was in Champaran that the theory and practice of Satyagrah came to be associated for the first time with the fight for freedom. It was here again that the entire strategy of the struggle was evolved. What was to be done if Gandhiji was arrested? That was the question of questions. A number of

suggestions were made. But again Mahatmaji's own method as he had practiced in South Africa was considered to be the most suitable. It was decided that in case the Mahatma went to jail, Maulana Mazhrul Haque and Babu Brajkishor Prasad would take the lead. If they were removed, Babu Dharnidhar and Babu Ram Navami Prasad would take charge of the work. If they too were picked up, Babu Rajendra Prasad, Babu Shambhu Saran and Babu Anugrah Narayan Singh were to fill the gap.

Mahatmaji went about from village to village in Champaran preaching love and inspiring faith and confidence among the people. Here he felt that his efforts for the uplift of the masses could not have enduring results unless an urge was created within them. For this, it was necessary to educate them. On the 13th of November, 1917 Mahatma Gandhi opened his first school at Barharwa Lakhansen, a village at a distance of about 20 miles to the east of Motihari. Another school was opened by Gandhiji on the 20th of November in a village called Bhitiharwa. A third school was opened on the 17th of January, 1918 at Madhuban, which had among its teachers, Mahadeva Desai.

It is worth mentioning that the Satyagrah of Champaran was responsible for initiation in the service of the motherland of two volunteers Acharya Kripalani and Deshratna Dr. Rajendra Prasad. While Bihar's indebtedness to Mahatma Gandhi is irretrievable not only for having succored her million from the tentacles of white planters but also for having breathed into her soul the new message.

Kaira

The Monsoon of 1917 was poor, resulting in the failure of crops in the Kaira District of Gujarat. At that time, there was in Ahmedabad an old organization called the Gujarat Sabha, which represented and worked for the political, social and economic welfare of Gujarat. Its work was being carried on the orthodox lines of the Liberals. Namely, petitions and representations so far as government was concerned. Gandhiji was invited to accept the presidentship of the Sabha.

At this stage, Gandhiji led the Sabha to strike a new path on the line of direct action. The government were realizing the dues

from the agriculturists during the pendency of the Sabha's appeal to government. Gandhiji induced the Sabha to issue instructions to the peasants to hold over payment till the Sabha's appeal was decided by government. Characteristic of his method of pursuing any public cause, he directed the Secretaries of the Sabha to send a copy of the instructions to the peasants and to the Divisional Commissioner. This was the first time that the bureaucracy was met with a firm stand by a public body. The Divisional Commissioner interpreted the instructions to the peasants given by the Sabha, as a direct call to disobey the orders of the subordinate officers, and threatened to take such action as he deemed proper under the circumstances. This created a very serious situation from the point of view of the Managing Committee of the Sabha, which was naturally accustomed to the old methods of liberal type. It was at this stage that Gandhiji took the matter under his personal supervision and shifted the headquarters from Ahmedabad to Nadiad, a central place in the Kaira district. All the workers also shifted their headquarters, and Gandhiji carried on correspondence with the government on the subject, after getting information, personally by visits to several villages and from the reports of workers specially deputed to visit the villages and make enquiries about crops. Gandhiji would have been satisfied with an independent Committee of Enquiry.

As anticipated, the government refused to appoint a Committee of Enquiry, because the Divisional commissioner threatened to resign. On refusal by government Gandhiji advised the peasantry to refuse to pay the assessment on the false basis of there being no failure of crops. This was the first such experiment on a large scale undertaken in India. The Motihari refusal to obey the Magistrate's order was a case of individual civil disobedience, though limited to small district. The struggle went on for a few months. All pressure was brought by giving agriculturists notices of forfeiture of lands, but thanks to the presence of Gandhiji and his constant movement in the district from place to place, the people were not only non-violent, but were also very firm and prepared for any amount of sacrifices for the common cause.

The matter ended with an honourable compromise with notices of forfeitures being withdrawn and the forfeited lands

returned. The experiment inspired a new confidence with a new outlook. The people saw that there was, after all, a new course open by which they could assert themselves and get what they wanted.

Bardoli

It is strange that the significance of Bardoli is little realized by those who talk of a Labour and Kisan Movement as distinct from the "bourgeois" movement of the Congress. In their attempt to fit every situation into a prefabricated mould, the leftists have often overlooked the fact that the Gandhian Congress sought its inspiration and strength from being a movement of the people or the kisans. The two terms were synonymous in India. Bordoli was, if anything, the spearhead of a military agrarian movement.

It will be seen, how from the very beginning Gandhiji believed that the key to Swaraj lay in the villages. His strategy was to choose a small target and focus all national forces on what looked a moderate issue, but was really a part of an explosive chain, the keystone of a whole edifice. We have seen how he chose a direct attack on the British rule in Champaran and in Kaira. In fact non-co-operation movement was only a preparation for a revolution to be started at Bardoli, though it had to be given up after one or two attempts following Chauri Chaura incidents.

The story of Bardoli is important not only as a landmark in the march to freedom, but as giving, at a high level, the true pattern of the Gandhian technique. To "BARDOLISE" the country became the ambition and plan of the national movement.

This technique may, perhaps, be analysed as:

(1) the choice of a just, moderate and direct issue;

(2) preparing the mass of people for fearless and disciplined defiance;

(3) simultaneous work of education, moral uplift and material betterment of the people;

(4) readiness for negotiation and compromise with the adversary;

(5) skilful steering of the movement to intenser and wider activity from stage to stage in sacrifice and suffering on one hand and aggressive defiance of authority on the other.

Bardoli was a typical tehsil with less than a lakh of population, the bulk of whom were agriculturists, with a sprinkling of money lenders, and other petty traders and occupants of larger holdings. Quite a considerable number of Gandhiji's Saryagrahis in South Africa were from Bardoli, including several Masalmans. Intense constructive work, organization of national schools and khadi centres, social reform, prohibition, had been carried on in Bardoli since Gandhiji's arrest in 1922.

The choice to lead the cherished campaign of Bardoli – which was to be a model and inspiration to the rest of the country – fell on Vallabhbhai deliberately. Vallabhbhai had come under Gandhi's spell much earlier and had already rediscovered himself in Kaira.

Gandhiji once, while arguing with the revolutionaries, remarked that he would retire in favour of, even a man of sword, if he found he was truly a man of the people, who gave up the plough to take to the sword.

It was six years later, in 1928 that an opportunity came to redeem the pledge of Bardoli. Bardoli was to have one of the periodical resettlements of land which occurred once in a stated period of 20 or 30 years, when Land Revenue was raised by another 25 per cent or so. The people of Bardoli would not pay this enhancement and first demanded an impartial investigation into economic conditions, burden of taxation, and such things as the state of roads in these villages. All the constitutional methods were tried for Government acceptance of the demand for a Committee of enquiry. Then an ultimatum was issued and a no tax campaign was organized. Vallabhbhai was invited to lead this battle by the Kisans in their Taluka conference.

Vallabhbhai came to live in the midst of these villagers as one of them. For dealing with the Muslim population, he was assisted by the veteran leaders Abhas Tyabji and Iman Saheb. A host of other trained workers were at his disposal and besides them the agriculturists spontaneously raised volunteers from among themselves. These were to serve in their own villages, to collect and carry information. Daily news-bulletins and pamphlets with

Vallabhbhai's speeches were published and distributed, not only in these villages but in towns and villages outside Bardoli. The stirring, simple words of Vallabhbhai sent a new thrill not only in Bardoli but in the whole of Gujarat at this time. I know that some of you are afraid of your lands being confiscated. What is confiscation? Will they take the lands away to England? The worst that can happen is that the lands might be transferred to government in their books, but if you are united you can defy anyone to come forward to cultivate the lands. And rest assured when you are ready to allow your lands to be confiscated the whole of Gujarat will be at your back. "Organise your village and you will set an example to others. The campaign has begun. Every village must now be an armed camp. The news from every village must reach the Taluka head-quarters daily and punctually and every instruction from the headquarters must promptly be obeyed. Discipline and organization means half the battle Government have at the most one patel and one talati to every village. For us every adult in the village must be a volunteer."

While preparations were thus going on in the villages, Vallabhbhai was carrying a correspondence with the Government. But the Government was not to yield and the warning was given that if the people of Bardoli defaulted in the payment of revenue, acting on their own or yielding to the advice of persons from outside, they would have to suffer the consequence. Vallabhbhai while thanking the Government for the threat and the warning reminded the Revenue Secretary that he evidently "missed the fact that the Government which you represent is truly dominated by persons from outside."The government soon began to act. Both threats and cajolery began to be used. In one village some banias paid the new assessment. But the people were not demoralized. Vallabhbhai had prepared them against such desertions. A satyagraha pledge was now being signed by all the villages.

The soul stirring eloquence of Vallabhbhai, in the peasants' idiom, had raised them to exalted heights, and fired them with a fearless resolve. "I see that these 15 days have taught you to cast fear from your hearts. You are however not yet completely free from it. Two annas in the rupee in still there. Shake it off. "You seem to have lost the capacity of righteous indignation against

wrong. The absence of it is cowardice. I go about in your village at deed of night sometimes, without ever once being asked, 'Halt. Who goes there? It is your quiescence that has been your undoing. I want to inoculate you with fearlessness. I want to galvanise you into life. I miss in your eyes the flash of indignation against wrong." Notices of forfeiture now began to be served by the Government on selected landlords who were expected to show weakness. But this was having no effect. Every day the strength and organization of the villages grew. Help in the shape of men and women workers and funds now began to come from outside. The world outside was becoming aware and was thrilled with what was happening in Bardoli. In the village itself enthusiasm reached a higher and higher level and the scenes of the mammoth meetings, of men and women of those days cannot be forgotten by those who participated in them.

The new life in the villages began to manifest itself in many ways, in better cleanliness, in temperance, in revival of Khadi, in awakening among the women, in the setting up of schools and Ashramas.

The close contact with the people and the burning zeal and rage that Vallabhbhai was experiencing and transmitting had brought home to him the stark reality, the central reality in India, the condition of the peasant. It became clearer and clearer to him and he developed his apotheosis of the peasant on a two-fold basis, his keen appreciation of very high place of the peasant in a true social economy and his poignant anguish at the very low state to which the peasant has been reduced, by the Government, supported by the 'educated' classes. As Gandhiji put it "Vallabhbhai found his Vallabh (God) in Bardoli." Bardoli had created its Sardar. The Government soon mobilized all its machinery and lawlessness was soon let loose, in rising tide and ferocity. Many of the workers were arrested and imprisoned, after mock trials by special magistrates. Bardoli had by now become the cynosure of all eyes in India. It has stood the fire beyond all expectations. Attempts at breaches in its ranks had failed and the bania, the parsi and the musalman had all stood fast. The heroism of the simple women of Bardoli was an inspiration for the whole country.

The Ahmedabad, and a Bombay, news about Bardoli were anxiously awaited and read. There were meetings of protest and for relief and the Working Committee of the Congress that met in Bombay passed a resolution on Bardoli that rang through the country. Several MLCs had already resigned their seats on the Bombay legislative Council. Many of the leaders visited Bardoli at this time. As Jamanalal Bajaj put it they came to purify themselves and warm themselves at the sacred flame that had been lit in the villages there. Bardoli was now attracting even wider attention. Houses were deserted. A "Scortched earth" policy was followed and people lived as if in war trenches. The special correspondent of the Bombay Times reported with flaming headlines; 'Peasant Rebellion', 'Bolshevik Regime in Bardoli. Reuter warned England of the Soviet Regime being established! There were questions in the House of Commons.

The Government frantically intensified its repression and reinforced the garrison at Bardoli. Also negotiations were opened with Vallabhbhai by the Government. The elephant was feeling powerless against the gnat. But threats of crushing the movement were reiterated. Vallabhbhai kept a complete balance of mind, and combined firmness with fairness and moderation in his demands. Bardoli had become an all-India question and arrest of Vallabhbhai would not help the Government any longer. A settlement was ultimately brought about. The disciplined but revolutionary battle had ended in a triumph for the peasantry who fought with the weapons of truth and patient suffering against an enemy who could any day have crushed them to atoms. It was the first great victory of Satyagraha on a mass-scale in which the victors and the vanquished both were winners. There is no doubt, that the example of Bardoli was an abiding source of inspiration all through the subsequent struggle in our freedom movement. It also helped the Imperial bureaucracy to a realization of the potential development of even an unarmed revolution.

CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMMES AND THE CONGRESS

Ever since the advent of Gandhiji and the transformation that had followed in the Congress, politics had assumed a new meaning and content. Swaraj, according to Gandhiji was not merely the transfer of power from the British to the Indians, but a moral and

material regeneration of the people. The Congress now followed a triple programme, 'Direct Action' on non-violent defiance of particular laws; constructive work; and constitutional agitation in the Legislatures. The Constructive Work was mainly concerned with reconstructing the villages, where the people of India lived. In a country where poverty had assumed such proportions as in India, the economic programme was the main work in any scheme of uplift. "god for the masses is their bread". In the programme of economic reconstruction khadi was the pivotal item of work. The chakha mixed up with the revolutionary doctrine of non-co-operation looked like a fax. But it was a piece of the whole set of the Gandhian idea and activity. The Congress sessions came to hold exhibitions which were a visual education in better village life and work. These sessions were themselves an object lesson in simple and clean living within the reach of the people, and were later held in gigantic camps in the countryside.

Soon the work developed to a stage when separate expert organizations had to be set up to take charge of special items of work. These new organizations were an integral part of the revolutionary machine of the Congress. The years of crisis when a Satyagraha movement moved, this yet country from end to end were few and far between. Only a few were occupied in the Councils or local and central governments. The mass of the selfless and more persistent workers, that had been the main strength of the Congress, were all along busy in villages and towns in what looked like small and insignificant activity, but was building the sanctions behind the militant movements and were transforming life of the people.

Khadi

The special session of the Congress at Calcutta in 1907 had prescribed hand-spinning and weaving of Khadi as a "measure of discipline and sacrifice for every man, woman and child" and this resolution was later clarified at Nagpur. Later, A.I.C.C.drew up a programme including 20 lakhs of charkhas along with a crore of men and money. After Gandhiji's arrest in 1922. Working Committee laid great stress on constructive work and a special department for khadi work was set u, as an expert organization unaffected by politics.

Village Industries

Khadi was only the central item of economic regeneration of the languishing villages. There still remained all arts and crafts that make up the life of the people in the villages. To this end the Congress set up the All India Village Industries Association at Wardha in 1934, as a self-acting independent and non-political organization, having for its object – village reorganization and reconstruction, including the revival of village industries and the moral and physical development of the villagers of India. A Board was set up with Dr. Kumarappa, as secretary, to work under the guidance of Gandhiji. The Association started with an immediate programme which aimed at improving village sanitation diet and village industries. Its main success lay in the expert research and direction that this body gave in these matters generally for the benefit of even such efforts as were being made outside its developing organization. Its headquarters at Wardha, besides running various small industries imparted training to village workers.

Hindustani Talimi Sangh

Another great problem in India was of education. The literacy figures had been so low and stagnant chiefly on account of lack of funds in the British Indian budget for coping with this colossal work and also for the utter unsuitability of the system of instruction for the mass of Indian boys. It was once again the genius of Gandhiji which devised a new system of education – the Basic National Education.

At the Haripura session, the Congress passed a resolution on national education. It said: "It is essential to build up national education on a new foundation and on a nationwide scale. As the Congress is having new opportunities of service and of influencing and controlling State education, it is necessary to lay down the basic principles which should guide such education and to take other necessary steps to give effect to them. The Congress is of opinion that for the primary and secondary stages a basic education should be imparted".

The Hindustani Talimi Sangh (All-India Education Board) came into existence in April, 1938. It made good progress. Two

provinces, C. P. and U.P. accepted it as their official policy of primary education. Training Centres were set up by the Governments in Bihar, Orissa, Bombay, Madras, Kashmir and other places, besides such private centres as the Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi and at Masulipatam and Gujarat, as well as schools for the children. A scheme of 'Nai Talim' was later inaugurated at Wardha, with the help of the leading educationists for educating the people of all age groups, from infancy to death. This was another name for training for a new way of life. Adult education was its more important part, and it progressed much further than the blue-print-stage. Wardha was also the centre for such organized activity as building up the common Hindustani language, as India's national language.

REMOVAL OF UNTOUCHABILITY

Removal of untouchability had been taken up by the Congress as one of its main work from the start of its new career. After the fast and Poona Pact, Gandhiji devoted most of his time to this work. A separate organization and fund was organized to specially look after Harijan work, with widespread branches and some of our best social workers were put in charge of mainly this activity.

Hindustani Seva Dal

In 1938, the Congress entrusted the work of training and organizing volunteers to a special body, the Hindustani Seva Dal with its headquarters in the province of Karnataka. An Academy for physical culture and training was set up and training camps were opened at various places throughout the country. The Seva Dal under Dr. Hardikar played an important part in the Civil disobedience movement, specially in enrolment of Congress members, picketing and in providing the Congress with a peaceful militia.

Mandatory Programme for Congressmen

Besides the work done by these bodies directly, there were various other activities that drew its inspiration and guidance from Gandhiji and the Congress. Later Gandhiji while making it obligatory on Congressmen to do one or other of the Constructive work items expanded the scope and formulated various new

items that are given below in his own works and with his comments.

Communal Unity: Political unity will be the natural fruit of a social revolution which will altogether eliminate communal feelings and ways of life. To make a beginning of such a revolution every Congressman must feel his identity with everyone of the millions of the inhabitants of Hindustan.

The separate electorates in India have created artificial incompatibles and living unity-an unbreakable heart unity; can never come out of these artificial entities being brought together on a common platform in the legislatures. Nevertheless, Congress should put up candidates for elective bodies in order to prevent reactionaries from entering them.

Removal of Untouchability is not merely a political necessity but something indispensable, so far as Hindus are concerned, for the very existence of Hindustism. In a spirit of non-violence Hindu Congressmen should influence the so called "Sanatanists" far more extensively than they have hitherto done. It is part of the task of building the edifice of Swaraj.

Prohibition: Medical men have to discover the ways of weaning the addicts from intoxicants. Women and students by acts of loving service have a special opportunity in advancing this reform. Congress committees can open recreation booths for the tired labour. The Constructive workers make legal prohibition easy and successful even if they do not pave the way for it.

Khadi must be taken with all its implications. It means a wholesale swadeshi mentality, a determination to find all the necessaries of life in India and that too through the labour and intellect of the villagers. This needs a revolutionary change in the mentality and tastes of many. Moreover khadi mentality means decentralization of the production and distribution of the necessaries of life. Heavy Industries will, of course, need be centralized and nationalized. But they will occupy the least part of the vast national activity which will mainly be in the villages. Every family with a plot of ground can grow cotton at least for family use. Every spinner would buy – if he has not his own – enough cotton for ginning, which he can easily do with a board and an iron rolling pin. For spinning Gandhiji strongly recommends the Dhanush Takli.

Other Village Industries: Village economy cannot be complete without the essential village industries such as hand-grinding, hand-pounding, soap making, paper making, match making, tanning, oil pressing etc. Congressmen can interest themselves in these.

illage Sanitation: If the majority of Congressmen were derived from our villages, as they should be, they should be able to make our villages models of cleanliness in every sense of the word.

New or Basic Education is a big field of work for many Congressmen. This education is meant to transform village children into model villagers. It develops both the body and the mind, and keeps the child rooted to the soil with a glorious vision of the future in the realization of which he or she begins to take his or her share from the very commencement of his or her career in school. Let those who wish, put themselves in tough with the Secretary of the Sangh at Sewagram.

Adult Education means primarily true political education of the adult by word of month. Side by side with the education by the month will be the literary education. Many methods are being tried to shorten the period of education.

Education in Health and Hygiene: The art of keeping one's health and the knowledge of hygiene is by itself a separate subject of study and corresponding practice. In a well ordered society the citizens know and observe the law of health and hygiene. No Congressman should disregard this item of the Constructive Programme.

***Women*:** Though Satyagraha has automatically brought India's women out from their darkness, Congressmen have not felt the call to see that women become equal partners in the fight for Swaraj. It is a privilege of Congressmen to give the women of India a lifting hand, to help them to realize their full status as honoured comrades in common service.

Provincial Languages: It is inherent in Swaraj based on non-violence that every individual makes his own direct contribution

to the Independence movement. The masses can do this only where every step is explained in their own languages.

National Language: Hindi is indisputably the language for all-India intercourse, because the largest number of people already know and understand it and which others can easily pick up. Unless our love of the masses is skin-deep we should spend as many months to learn Hindustani as the years we spend over learning English.

Economic Equality is the master key to non-violent Independence. Working for economic equality means abolishing the eternal conflict between capital and labour. It means the leveling down of the few rich in shoes hands is concentrated the bulk of the nation's wealth on the one hand, and the leveling up of the semi-starved naked millions on the other. A violent and bloody revolution is a certainty one day unless there is a voluntary abdication of riches and the power that riches give and sharing them for the common good.

Kisans: When the Kisans become conscious of their non-violent strength, no power on earth can resist them. But on no account they should be used for power politics. Those who would know Gandhiji's method of organizing Kisans may profitably study the movement in Champaran, in Kheda, Bardoli and Barsad.

Labour: Ahmedabad Labour Union is a model for all India to copy. Its basis is non-violence pure and simple. It has its hospital, its schools for the children of the mill hands, its classes for adults, its won printing press and khadi depot and its won residential quarters. It has to its credit very successful strikes which were wholly non-violent. Mill owners and labour have governed their relations largely through voluntary arbitration.

Adivasis: Service of advasis though occurring as the 16th number in the Constructive programme is not the least in point of importance.

Lepers: The only institution run by an Indian, as a pure labour of love, is by Manohar Dewan near Wardha. It is working under the inspiration and guidance of Vinoba Bhabe.

6

Gandhian March to Portals of Freedom

There are certain pages in the histories of nations which are referred to by later generations with pride and reverence. Our age is one such which will be remembered as the era of the resurrection of our nation, when our country passed from a state of subjection to a foreign power to one of freedom. This great transition is consummated by the consecrated will of the people and their determined non-violent resistance to the greatest imperialist power. This emergence of our nation is achieved without a long drawn out armed conflict with its aftermath of hatred, bitterness and decline in moral standards. We owed this in the main to Mahatma Gandhi who vitalized the country, awakened its will, roused its energies and inspired its political thinking with a new ethical passion.

A SAINT AND A REVOLUTIONARY

In his book on "The Yogi and the Commissar" Arthur Koestler observed that the future of European civilization depended on the refashioning of the human mind. "Neither the saint nor the revolutionary can save us, only the synthesis of the two." We have had such a synthesis in Gandhi, who was at once a saint and a revolutionary. His saintliness had little in common with sectarian orthodoxy. For him, the Ultimate Spirit was greater than the scriptures, the One Supreme whom all religions adore. The sacred fire is the same in its essence wherever it may be burning. Historical accidents account for the varied expressions we employ to represent the same meaning. Gandhi's faith in God made him an incorrigible

optimist about the future of man. From his faith flowed his devotion to truth and love, his singleness of purpose, his soul of honour, attributes that have endeared him to us all. His call to us was to deepen our spirits and enlarge the scope of our affections. The nobler a soul is, it is said, the more objects of campassion it has. The greatest souls look upon the whole world as their family, *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam.*

Though Gandhi contributed a great deal to the recovery of our nation, to the revelation of its mental and moral resources so long repressed by enslavement, though he led, guided and controlled for over a generation our liberation movement which has to its credit many sacred memories and sacrificial efforts, our national revival is not the chief or the highest part of his great work..

PROPHET OF TRUTH

When the strife of these days is forgotten, Gandhi will stand out in history as the great prophet of truth and love in the settlement of national and international disputes. In clear and confident tones he tells us that this would of blood of tears is not what the world should be. We must build a world of peace and we cannot do so unless we secure for it a truly moral foundation. We may hold different metaphysical views, adopt different modes of worship and there are millions today who do not desire or place their faith in any God at all. But every one of us will feel highly offended if he is pronounced destitute of any moral sense, if he is said to be untruthful or unloving. All religious and systems of morality are agreed that respect for life, respect for intangible possessions, good name and honour, constitute morality and justice. Do not do unto others what you would not like to be done to you. *Atmanah pratikulani paresam na samacharet.* Even primitive savages accept this principle.

Only for them its appreciation is limited to their own tribe and race and those outside are not regarded as human beings. As our horizon expands, as our moral sense deepens, we feel that these moral precepts are valid for all human beings. The great German philosopher Kant, who was very sensitive to right and wrong, declared, "No evil shocks the mind like injustice; all other evil that we suffer is as nothing compared therewith". He continues, "If

justice should perish, it would no longer be worth living for human beings to live on earth". Fear of our own safety or the peril of our country should not prevent us from protesting against injustice and resisting wrongs. Neutrality between right and wrong is a sign of moral perversity.

This aching world longs to live but it does not know how. Our projects for reshaping life which began in hope have ended in failure. Our sorrows and sufferings are being repeated under other forms. All this is not due to the defects of the political machinery of the League of Nations or the United Nations Organization but to the failings of men who operate them. The political and economic factors, geography, and geology, scientific discovery and industrial development are no doubt important but more important than all these is the human element which is a complex of wisdom, judgement, disinterestedness, a sense of fairplay, self-mastery or their opposites of greed, ambition, vanity, pride and jealousy. The real problem is the human one. History is made more by the emotions of men than by the forces of economics. Whether the world makes for achievement or frustration depends on the nature of the human material. There-education of man, the discipline of his will and intelligence which will cure his weaknesses to which he is inclined and strengthen the virtues which he requires is what we need. We should endow human beings with a sense of right which will burn up the grosser elements of our nature in its consuming flame.

Today the world is like a ship with no captain, heading for the rocks. It is swept by passion and folly. We do not know whether it is passing through birth pangs or death throes. If we adopt the path of greed, hatred and self-interest, we will become sometimes less than human. If we take the other path of fortitude, unselfish service and sacrifice, we will reach heights of splendour in body, mind and spirit of which we can hardly dream. Irreligion is our malady and religion as an adventure of spirit, as radical transformation of human nature is the cure for it.

CONCEPT OF NON-VIOLENCE

Such a religion will be revolutionary in character requiring us to embrace by an act of faith a vision of humanity based on

justice, racial and national. Enslavement of one people by another, whatever may be the reason, is an act of injustice. Those who suffer from such injustice wish to get rid of it by armed resistance. It is Gandhi's supreme contribution that he substitutes for this method of force the method of love.

It is said that non-violence is the dream of the wise, while violence is the history of man. It is tru that wars are obvious and dramatic and their results in changing the course of history are evident and striking. But there is a struggle which goes on without arms and violence in the minds of men. The consequences of this deeper struggle are not recorded in the statistics of the killed and the injured. It is the struggle for human decency, for the avoidance of the physical strife which restricts human life, for a world without wars and famines, for raising humanity to a higher plane. Gandhi was the most effective fighter in this great struggle. His message is not a matter for academic debate by intellectual highbrows. It is the cry of exasperated mankind which is at the crossroads. Which shall prevail the law of the jungle or law of love! Every child that is born into the world offers by its advent the assurance that love is the basis of life. The common people are simple and kind. They love their neighbours and go out of their way to help them. It is wrong to assume that human nature is warlike and it is difficult to change it. Violence is not born in men but is built into them. Human nature is plastic and is capable of improvement. Cannibalism and human sacrifices are abolished. The diseased and the insane are not cut off. We are not happy about the execution of murderers. We look forward to a time when criminals and lunatics will be treated as objects of remedial care.

It is argued that it will not be possible for one nation to adopt non-violence while others are heavily armed. Such a view will make all progress impossible. The human race did not get on its hind legs as one man. However general the consciousness that the posture is possible may have been someone had to make a start with the gesture. Even now someone thas to express consciously the half-realised resentment of the ordinary human being to the organization of war. Gandhi felt that he could make a start with the Indian people who, in his opinion, had an innate love of truth and hatred of force. If India by the practice of non-resistance

overthrows foreign rule, she will help to build a new humanity out of the ruins of a war-weary and worn-out world.

Gandhi believes that non-violence is the most effective remedy in all conditions. In this battle he who wins gains freedom, he who falls is already free. "To experiment with Ahimsa in face of a murderer is to seek self-destruction. But this is the real test of Ahimsa. He who gets himself killed out of sheer helplessness, however, can in no way be said to have passed the test. He, who when being killed bears no anger against his murderer, and even asks God to forgive him, is truly non-violent. In a world curse by obstinate prejudice, held together by unfading memories of ancient feuds, who can measure the value of this matchless weapon of reconciling love".

ONE WITH THE POOREST OF THE POOR

"Physician, heal thyself," is the challenge of the successful nations to the people of India. Gandhi has accepted this challenge and has spent his life in the task of the healing of the nation. He has known the physical poverty intellectual inertia and spiritual decadence of his people. He has seen in his life thousands of ragged skeletons of human beings crawling to the wayside ditches to die. He has seen workers huddled together in tenements leading a poor careworn existence on a petty wage condemned to insecurity and poverty never far removed from destitution. He has seen middle classes grow up, Eurasian in mentality, insensitive to ideals. He has felt the moral injury inflicted by political subjection. Patiently he has addressed himself to the task of the regeneration of his people.

He has roused their sense of self-respect, goaded them to strive for better conditions and look at their masters, white or brown, with fearlessness. None are so fitted to break the chain so as those who were them. He symbolizes the struggle of the common man and has identified himself with the starving millions by for going privileges which others cannot share. His loan cloth, his spinning wheel, his third class travel are symbolic of his community with the poorest of the country.

Freedom is not merely the improvement of physical conditions or the achievement of political independence. It is advance into

a new life when all things undergo transformation and all forms of human oppressions cease. Gandhi seeks to emancipate us from the network of social restrictions imposed on us by centuries of tradition. He enlarged the progress of the Congress and made in include the removal of the curse of untouchability, the evil of drink, the pride of caste and the prejudice of religion. The caste and the outcaste, the rich and the poor, the Muslim and the Hindu, the Sikh and the Christian, are all brethren in his integrated vision of the new India which is in the making. Every period of transition is one of friction, resistance, conflict, distress of mind, a cruel clash of rival loyalties. The old dose not yield without protest, the new is not accepted without resistance. In our generation there has been a considerable dislocation of society, decay of conventions and beliefs and breakdown of authority. Our society is heaving like some huge animal in pain. We feel that there has been no age so disillusioned, so electric, so unbelieving as ours. In such a period when all things are on the move, Gandhi asks us to hold fast to the great loyalties of spirit, to virtue and to truth.

ENDS AND MEANS

In his anxiety to get rid of British rule he does not resort to falsehood or cunning, deceit or violence. He would rather postpone the achievement of Indian freedom than resort to wrong means. When he returned from Second Round Table Conference, he said, "I admit that I have come back empty handed, but I am thankful that I have not lowered or in any way compromised the honour of the flag that was entrusted to me. It has been my constant prayer that I may not in an unguarded moment of weakness betray myself into act or word that may be unbecoming to the dignity of my country or the trust which my countrymen have reposed in me. Thanks to his leadership, the struggle for Indian freedom has been unmixed with any racial animosity. There lurks no ill will for Ireland or is expressing itself in Palestine today we will see how the Indian movement for independence has been a clean one. That times are exceptional and tempers frayed, there is a temptation to commit excesses but Gandhi does not tolerate them. When the Bombay naval disturbances occurred, he scolded those who started them. He was fully aware of the extent of

corruption in high places, of the failure of services, of masking of secular ambition by the profession of religious purpose, of the irritation of the people and yet he warns us not to lose grip over fundamental principles. He advises us to view the affairs of our disordered and long suffering country in the light of great ideals.

That we established freedom without any bloodshed and anarchy was a great triumph for Gandhi and his principle of non-violence. He certainly did not ask us to acquiesce in wrong or submit meekly to injustice. He advised us again and again to resist injustice as embodied in British rule. Suffering there has been but it has been the suffering of our own people. Thousands lost their lives. Many more lost their property and still more suffered in prison. The British Government's realization that it was impossible to carry on the old line was due to the organized resistance of the Indian people to British rule. The war of course gave great impetus to the liberation movements. Public opinion of the world was insistent that imperialism should be liquidated. The British Government's acceptance of independence to India was a response to the necessities of the case.

His Faith in Human Goodness

There were many among the younger members of the country who viewed the British Government's proposals with profound misgivings. They saw in it under cover of a generous gesture a manoeuvre more complication but similar in trend to the old policy of divide and rule. But Gandhi advised us not to lose faith in ourselves or even in the British. To suspect motives is a species of weakness. When division of country was forced on us, Gandhi opposed it passionately to the last moment and when this division bore its gory fruit and fierce and brutal fratricidal was raged and sanity and goodwill were totally lost, Gandhi along remained steadfast in his all embracing compassion, in his faith in human goodness and his endeavour to bring the people back to sanity and goodwill. Full freedom for the country could not be achieved by the transfer of political power. The achievement of political freedom was a step but only a: step towards realization of the ideals which the Congress wet to itself when established in 1885. Gandhi was the embodied voice of sixty years of our struggle for freedom and the unity of our people.

When we pass from the ease and security of servitude to the risk and adventure of freedom, we have to face dangers and differences. The tragic chain of events starting from August 16th, 1946 in Calcutta with all their frightfulness and brutality, in Noakhali, Bihar, and other places. Reaching culmination in unabashed mass terrorization and massacres in the Punjab and the N.W.F. Provinces were unfortunately the result of the doctrine of hatred preached and provoked openly by some of our leaders.

IMPACT OF LEAGUE ACTION

The Indian National Congress adopted direct action under the names of non-cooperation, civil disobedience and Satyagraha but it was generally controlled by the principle of non-violence. In the murder, arson and loot that followed the Muslim League programme of direct action which and not exclude violence from its conception, the human bonds were united and the beast in man loosened. Those who talked incessantly of violence, of bloodshed, of civil war, could not escape responsibility for the excesses of the mobs and violent attacks on person and property.

Terrorism became a regular instrument of politics in the months after Second World War. It was a new and disturbing force in the politics of the world. It emerged from the practices natural to total was where the justice of the means was derived from the righteousness of the end. A deliberate cult of toughness spread and we were feeling ashamed of pity as of a crime. Gangster methods were used as a form of pressure on the Government by those who believed that the march of events was too slow and needed a kick.

History demonstrates that murders breed murders and we can cut across the vicious circle only by getting behind and trying to understand. That the end justifies the means, that morality may be subordinated to the interest of the groups, race or nation is an anti-social doctrine. Though Gandhi was deeply disturbed by the rising wave of violence, he felt that the spirit of violence would be killed and would not continue as it was contrary to the spirit of this land. These terrible happenings in the country demonstrated not only that there were barbarians in all groups but also that there were finer elements capable of quiet charity and elemental

goodness. The great Buddha said that the republic of the Lichchavis would prosper so long as the members of their assembly met frequently, showed reverence to age, experience and ability, transacted business in concord and harmony and did not develop selfish parties engaged in perpetual wrangling for their narrow and selfish ends. If we are to adopt his advice we must produce a framework which will reduce internal conflict and foster the virtues which make for the values of civilization, humility understanding and justice.

Indians are One

The people – whether they are Hindus or Muslims, Princes or peasants – belong to this one country. Earth and Heaven have combined to make them belong to one another, if they try to disown it, their gait, their cast of countenance, their modes of thought, their ways of behaviour, they will all betray them. It is not possible for us to think that we belong to different nationalities. Our whole ancestry is there. Take the problems from which we suffer: our hunger, our poverty, our disease, our malnutrition – these are common to all. Take the psychological evils from which we suffer – the loss of human dignity, the slavery of the mind, the stunting of sensibility and the shame of subjection – these are common to all: Hindus or Muslims, Princes or peasants.

I remember how Anatole France went up to the Musse Guimet on the first of May 1890 in Paris and there in the silence and simplicity of the gods of Asia reflected on the aim of existence, on the meaning of life, on the values which peoples and Governments are in search of. Then his eyes fell on the statue of the Buddha. Anatole felt like kneeling down and praying to him as to a God, the Buddha, eternally young, clad in ascetic robes, seated on the lotus of purity with his two fingers upraised admonishing all humanity to develop comprehension, and charity wisdom and love, prana and karuna. If you have understanding, if you have compassion, you will be able to overcome the problems of this world. Asoka, Budha's great disciple, when he found his Empire inhabited by men of all races and religions said:

"Samavaya eva sadhuh"

"Concord alone is the supreme good"

A Symphony – that is India

India is a symphony where there are, as in an orchestra different instruments, each with its particular sonority, each with its special sound, all combining to interpret one particular score. It is this kind of combination that this country has stood for. It never adopted inquisitorial methods. It never asked the Parsis or the Jews or the Christians or the Muslims who came and took shelter there to change their creeds or became absorbed in what might be called a uniform Hindu humanity. It never did this. “Live and let live” – that has been the spirit of this country.

If we, therefore, stand out for the great ideal for which this country has stood, the ideal which has survived the assaults of invaders, the ideal for which, unswervingly and even along, Gandhi stood amidst a contagion of madness and brutality, if we are able to do it, the flame which sustained us in overcoming foreign rule, would fire our efforts to build a united and free India.

To what destinies our nation is marching we do not know. But this at least we know that those destinies have been perceptibly affected by the life and work of this great soul, this central figure of our age who has disclosed to an unheeding world the beauty of truth and the power of love. Gandhi belonged to the type that redeems the human race. His life which has been a testimony of devotion to freedom, of allegiance to faith, of the undying glory of duty fulfilled, of sacrifice gladly accepted for all human ideals, will continue to inspire countless generations for nobler living.

7

India’s Struggle for Freedom: Role of Associated Movements

India’s struggle for freedom had been a long drawnout battle. Though it actually began in the second half of the 19th century, isolated attempts were made in various parts of the country to being the British rule in India to an end about a century earlier. The real power in northern India passed into the hands of the British in 1757. The loss of independence provided the motive force for the struggle for freedom and Indians in different parts of the country began their efforts to throw off the voke of the alien rulers. It took over 100 years for the struggle to gain full momentum. Very seldom, however, during this period (1757 to 1857) was the country free from either civil or military disturbances and there was plenty of opposition, often from very substantial section of the common people.

Surprisingly enough, the opposition to foreign rule in early years came more from the peasants, labourers and the weaker sections of the society that from the educated bourgeois classes. Unscrupulous defiance of moral principle and the reckless exploitation of the masses that characterized the early activities of the traders made the rule of the East India Company hateful to the people. The proselytizing activities of the Christian missionaries were greatly resented all around. The deliberate destruction of Indian manufacturer and handicrafts aggravated agrarian misery and economic discontent. All these factors led to local resistance in different parts of this vast country which was basically united in its opposition to the British rule.

The uprisings of the Chuars in 1799 in the districts of Manbum, Bankura and Midnapore which took and alarming turn were master minded by the Rani of Midnapore. The Rani was taken prisoner on April 6, 1799 which only made the Chuars more furious.

Equally important in the annals of India's struggle for freedom is the rebellion of the Santhals (1855) occupying Rajmahal Hills against the British Government who in league –with the mahajans or money lenders oppressed the industrious people, there being even cases of molestation of women. Under the leadership of two brothers, Sidhu and Kanhu, ten thousand Santhals met in June 1855 and declared their intention to "take possession of the country and set up a government of their own". In spite of the ruthless measures of the British Government to suppress them, the Santhals showed no signs of submission till February 1856 when their leaders were arrested and most inhuman barbarities were practiced on the Santhals after they were defeated.

We need not go into the details of many other revolts and disturbances throughout the country which have been the subject matter of many dissertations but it is apparent that there was a cry to "drive out the British" almost throughout the first century of the British rule in India.

GREAT REVOLT OF 1857

The British, however, refused to heed the warning or even to care for it as they had developed on over weaning confidence in their strength in India. Therefore when the Great Revolt of 1857 took place, they were completely stunned. It was the first organized attempt on the part of the Indians for the emancipation of their country. No doubt, the British came out victorious at the end but the Indians too gained in the sense that the movement became a symbol of inspiration and sacrifice for the subsequent generations.

The failure of the outbreak of 1857 opened a new phase in India's struggle for freedom. The idea of open armed resistance against the British was at a discount, that it was not altogether discarded as is evident from the various rebellions which broke out in several parts of the country during the years 1859-1872. The most important of them were the Indigo Disturbances in Bengal, the movements of the Wahabis in Bihar, Bengal and other parts of the country and the Kuka in the Punjab.

WAHABI MOVEMENT

The great Wahabi Movement covered period of over 50 years and was spread from the North-West Frontier to Bengal and Bihar. It was not an ephemeral or sudden upheaval: without any definite aim or organization, like the Revolt of 1857. The movement continued well over forty years after the death of its leader Saiyid Ahmed in 1831. The British set over twenty expeditions before they were able to crush the movement. Important leaders of the movement-Yahya Ali, Ahmadullah, Amiruddin, Ibrahim Mandal, Rafique Mandal and their comrades were tried at the state trials of Ambala (1864), Patna (1865), Malda (Sept. 1870) and Rajmahal (October 1870), convicted and transported for life.

A similar movement known as the Faraizi Movement started in Bengal by haji Shhariatullah of Faridpur made incumbent on its followers to carry on struggle against the political and economic exploitation of the foreigners. His son Dadu Miyan (1819-1860) asserted that the earth belonged to God and no one has the right to occupy it. The movement lost much of its vigour after the death of Dadu Miyan in 1860.

Kuka Movement

The Kuka Movement marked the first major reaction of the people in the Punjab to the new political order initiated by the British after 1849. the Namdhari Movement of which the Kuka Movement was the most important phase aimed at the overthrow of the British rule. Ram Singh, who became its leader in 1863, gave military training to his followers. It seemed inevitable that before long a clash would occur between the Kukas and the British Government. The clash actually occurred over the question of slaughter of cows. It started with murderous attacks on butchers of Amritsar and Raikot (Ludhiana District) in 1871 and culminated in the Kuka raid on Malerkotla on January 15, 1872. The Kuka outbreak of 1872 was visited by terrible punishment, which was equaled in brutality by few events in our history. A large number of kuka prisoners were blown to death with cannons, their leader

Ram Singh was deported to Rangoon. There were some of the militant movements which preceded the birth of the Indian National Congress. However it was the intellectual movement which now dominated politics. The political ideas and organizations which had taken root before 1857 now flowered into a new national or political consciousness. This was brought about by sudden revelation of India's past glory through the works of foreign and Indian scholars and large scale ex-cavations carried out by Alexander Cunningham. The preachings of various associations such as the Arya Samaj, Theosophical Society and Ramakrishna Mission also helped in this process.

Arya Samaj

Founded in 1875 by Swami Dayanand Saraswati, the Arya Sabha played a notable role in the development of a new national consciousness among the Hindus. In fact, it became "the foremost agency for planting a sturdy independent nationalism in the Punjab". Some of the important national leaders such as Lajpat Rai and Hans Raj were staunch Arya Samajists. It also provided a chain of educational institutions which became the centre of patriotic activities in the national struggle. Sir Valentine Chirol commented on the seditious role of the Arya Samaj that it "has sometimes barely disguised more than a merely Platonic desire to see the British quit India. "Sir Denzil Ibbetson was informed that "where-ever there was Arya Sanaj, it was the centre of seditious talk. "Sir Mechael O'Dwyer observed that "an enormous population of the Hindus convicted of seditions and other political offences from 1907 to present day (1925) are members of the Samaj."

The Servants of India Society

The Servants of India Society was founded by Gokhale in 1905. About its mission he wrote; "The Servants of India Society will train man prepared to devote their lives to the cause of the country in a religious spirit and will seek to promote, by all constitutional means the national interests of the Indian people." A member could be admitted to the Society only on the recommendation of the Council consisting of three ordinary members and the First Member (or President). Every membe4r

was required to take seven vows at the time of enrolment and had to undergo training for a period of five years. The branches of the Society were soon opened in Madras (1910), Nagpur (1911), Bombay (1911) and Allahabad (1913) and centres for works were subsequently established in Ambala, Cuttack and Kozhikode. The official organ of the Society "The Servants of India" was started in 1918 and continued upto 1939. Besides involving itself in social service and educational activities, the Society co-operated with the Congress in the political sphere and helped her in the collection of funds. The Society continued the mission of its founder, after his demise, and enjoyed the patronage of such renowned persons as Hriday Nath Kunzru, A.D. Mani, and in recent times of Lal Bahadur Shastri.

KUMARAN ASAN AND HIS MOVEMENT

In this connection reference may be made to another movement in the south which has received scant attention. Sri Narayana Guru and Kumaran Asan (1873-1924) led a movement in Kerala which made a great impact on the people, awakened them from their slumber and revolutionized the life of a large number of people. This socio-economic movement never found a legitimate place, even as a footnote in the nationalist history of India, mainly because of the ignorance or lack of appreciation of the movement south of the Vindhya ranges. Romain Rolland, in his book "The Life of Ramakrishna" refers to the personality of this "Great Guru whose beneficent spiritual activity was exercised for more than 40 years in the State of Travencore over some million faithful souls". He preached, "if one may say so, afjnana of action, a great intellectual religious, having a lively sense of the people, and their social needs. It has greatly contributed to the uplifting of the oppressed classes in Southern India and its activities have in a measure been allied to those of Gandhi."

Asan's poetry was an instrument and agent of the revolutionary movement and it has, therefore, to be studied against the historical circumstances which obtained in Kerala during those stirring years. He was a great social reformer and bellwether of a great social renaissance movement. The lower castes Cherumas, called 'two-legged animals', the Ezhevas and other depressed

classes who had to pay "a tax for the hair he grew on his head, and each woman had to pay a breast tax. "Kumaran Asan, through his literary creations, effected tremendous transformations in the intellectual horizon of Kerala, and paved the way for "the regeneration of the society and growth of political rights and liberties." Asan was equally concerned with the freedom of the country but believed that this goal could be reached only by passing through stages of social emancipation and inter-caste harmony.

DEOBAND MOVEMENT

Similarly the Deoband Movement started by some of the Muslim Ulemas after the failure of the Outbreak of 1857, held that it was incumbent upon the Muslims to drive the British out of the country. Contrary to the views of the Aligarh School led by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, the followers of Deoband School associated with the Congress in its struggle for freedom.

Birsa Movement

The Birsa Movement of 1895 aimed at the overthrow of the British Raj and the establishment of the Munda Self-Government. It continued for 3 years even after the arrest of its leader Birsa in January 1898 who was deported to Ranchi. He renewed his activities after release and exhorted its followers to get rid of the foreign oppressors and establish their own rule. In the fight that ensured, about 2000 Mundas were killed, Birsa was captured and died in June 1900 while in jail.

REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT

Meanwhile the Indian National Congress founded in 1883 by Allan Octavian Hume (1829-1912) and others with the blessings of the then Viceroy Lord Dufferin was continuing its agitation on constitutional lines. However its critics regarded its policy as 'Mendicant', and a new wave of nationalism was sweeping over Bengal and Maharashtra. Its pioneer in Bengal was Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1835-1894) the renowned author of Vande Mataram (Hail Mother) hymn. In Maharashtra the message of nationalism was preached by Bal Gangadhar Tilak whose political

views were extremist. In the Punjab Lajpat Rai (1865-1928) and in Bengal, Bepin Chandra Pal (1858-1932) criticized the Congress, as its propaganda was confined to a few English educated classes. Swaraj (independence), Swadeshi (use of home-made goods) and boycott became the battle cry of these extremists.

The climax was reached when Bangal was partitioned in 1905. The development of terrorism was a notable feature of this movement. Though the objective of the adherents of this movement was the same as that of the Indian National Congress, yet they differed in the methods to be adopted to achieve the goal. These revolutionaries had no faith in the constitutional means followed by the Congress, and had no hesitation to use arms. Their belief in the efficacy of the cult of violence was fortified by studies of the methods adopted by freedom fighters in the West. It was also accentuated by the severe measures of repression taken by the Government to crush the unarmed people's aspirations for freedom.

The revolutionary movement in India which continued side by side with the Congress had its beginning in 1897 when two British officers. W. C. Rand and Lt. Aversi wee murdered by the two brothers Damodar and Balkrishna Chapekar who were sentenced to death in fact the first secret revolutionary society was organized by Wasudeo Balwant Phadke of Maharashtra who died in jail in 1883. The policy of repression adopted by the Government, especially after the Partition of Bengal, further strengthened this movement and led to the rise of a new party, later on known as the Revolutionary Party. The procurement of arms winning over of Indian solders serving under British Command, imparting military training to their cadres and open rebellion in case of a favourable international situation formed a part of their strategy. Arms and ammunition were also smuggled but as the revolutionaries and little capacity to pay, they extorted money from the rich and affluent.

A network of secret societies were set up in different parts of the country, the most important being the Anusilan Samiti or the Society for the Promotion of Culture and Training, established by Berindra Kumar Ghose (brother of Aurobindo Ghose) in 1906 and Yugantar Samiti. V. D. Savarkar founded an association Abhiuava

Bharat in 1904 in Maharashtra while Nilakanta Brahmachari organized a secret society in Madras. We need not go into details about the several cases of shooting of British officers by the young revolutionaries which led to the martyrdom of Khudiram Bose. Amir Chand, Avadh Behari, Bal Mukund, Basanta Kumar Biswas, Vanchi Aiyar, Ashfaqullah and many others.

The Chittagong armoury raid led by Surya Sen in April 1930 was a daring exploit in the annals of the struggle for freedom. For these years after this raid the revolutionaries carried on their activities in spite of numcrous arrests. Hindustan Socialist Republican Association was quite active in the Punjab and U.P. Chandra Shekhar Azad of the favour Kakori Conspiracy Case and Bhagat singh of the Labore Conspiracy case whose names are household words belonged to this association. Reference may also be made to the establishment of secret revolutionary societies in the South by Remandha in Andhra Pradesh, Rangaraju in Madras and Krishna Kumar in Karnataka.

The revolutionaries from the very beginning realized the need for setting up centres of agitation and propaganda abroad. These foreign centres of agitation in U.K.France, Germany, USSR, the USA and Canada, etc. proved to be a thron in the flesh of imperial Britain, particularly during the First and the Second World Wars. Shyamji Krishna Varma, Madam Cama and Sardar Singh Raina were some of the leaders of this movement in London and France. In 1914 occurred the famous episode of Kamagata Maru which aroused deep anti-British feelings among the Indians settled in USA and Canada. In fact, it formed a part of the famous Ghadar Movement organized in America by Har Dayal, Bhai Permanand, Sohan Singh and others. The heroism and sacrifices of these revolutionaries served to keep alive the flame of patriotism during the dark days of British imperial rule.

Home Rule Movement

The cleavage between the two wings – the Extremists and the Moderates – of the Indian National Congress led to the launching of what is known as the Home Rule Movement independently both by Tilak and Annie Besant. Swaraj or independence, the goal of Nationalism became the war cry of the Home Rule Movement.

Annie Besant founded the Home Rule League in 1916 and edited two journals, *The New India* and the *Commonweal*. It was at the call of this crusader for India's freedom that Sarojini Naidu decided to enter into active politics and joined the Home Rule League. Indeed the triumphant career of Home Rule Movement made the British Government nervous. Tilak's direct appeal to the people in a language easily understood by them ushered in a movement of incalculable potentiality. The Home Rule Movement marked the beginning of a new phase in India's struggle for freedom. It placed before the country a concrete scheme of self-government. It also emphasized that entire national resources should be utilized to attain freedom and all national efforts should be geared to this one specific purpose.

INDIAN NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION

At the end of the World War I, the British Government formulated a scheme of reforms which was known as the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms and embodied in the Government of India Act 1919. While the Congress at its session held at Bombay in 1918 under the Presidentship of Hasan Imam condemned the proposals as "disappointing and unsatisfactory", the Moderates found them to be acceptable and formed what is known as the *Indian National Liberal Federation*. The Liberal leaders dis-associated themselves from the Congress and declared that the Reform as a great constitutional advance even without any modification and extended its support to the Government to make them a success.

Khilafat Movement

Gandhiji had now taken over the stewardship of the Congress after his return from South Africa. He too was at first in favour of making these reforms work but certain factors, particularly the economic trouble due to hike in prices and oppressive taxation accentuated the hardship of the people.

Shaukat Ali and Mohammed Ali, the two brothers, and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad organized the Khilafat Movement on the question of dismemberment of Turkey after her defeat in World War 1. The Ulemas of Deoband and Firangi Mahal and Hakim Ajmal Khan zealously participated in the Movement.

Though basically a congregation of Ulemas, the Khilafat Movement also contained in its rank and leadership men of diverse political persuasions nationalists, revolutionary nationalists, and even Communists and Bolsheviks. They were all combined in their hatred of British rule. Gandhiji wholeheartedly supported the Khilafat Movement which provided a rare opportunity to bring Hindas and Muslims closer. He launched a Non-co-operation Movement (1920-22) on a mass scale to compel the British to grant independence to India, and to rectify the wrong done to Turkey. Gandhiji's appeal brought forth an amazing response. People defied the law and about thirty thousand people were arrested. The British Government adopted repressive measures and declared both the Congress and the Khilafat organisaations unlawful. However, there was a case of mob violence at Chauri Chaura in U.P. resulting in the death of a few policemen which led Gandhiji to suspend the movement.

Moplah Movement

The Moplah outbreak of 1921 in the wake of Khilapat agitation also deserves to be mentioned. The Moplahs roes in revolt in Malabar, killed British officers and declared the establishment of Swaraj. However in the process Moplahs were also guilty of acts of forcible conversion of Hindus and looting of their property. The British Government came down with a heavy hand, and in the fierce fighting that followed about 3,000 Moplahs were killed, and another batch of seventy died in horrible conditions due to asphyxiation as they were being conveyed by train without any arrangement for ventilation.

Akali Movement

While the Non-Co-operation Movement was still progressing and Gandhiji was in prison, a new wave of discontent spread in the Punjab due to the Akali agitation. The religio-political struggle of the Akalis primarily directed against the priests and the *mahants* eventually turned against the British and lasted for over 5 years (1920-1925). About 30,000 men and women courted arrest, 400 of them died and about 2,000 were wounded. The Congress gave active support to movement which led to political awakening in the Punjab and henceforward the Sikhs played a notable role in

the country's struggle for freedom. Though a martial race, the Sikhs too adopted the Congress creed of non-violent non-co-operation. In fact, the Akali movement took a turn as a struggle for the liberation of the country which brought all sections of the people, the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims together and it helped them to form a united front against the foreign rulers.

Babbar Akali Movement

In the wake of the Akali Movement came the Babbar Akali Movement, an underground terrorist movement in 1921 mostly in the Jullundur Doab, the territory between Satluj and the Beas. Its aim was to overthrow the British Government by a campaign of murders and terrorism in the Punjab. They committed a number of acts of violence and fought pitched battles against the police. Many of them were killed in encounters, while out of 67 arrested, 5 were sentenced to death, 11 to transportation for life and 38 to various terms of imprisonment. The movement of the Babbars was short-lived but because of its intensity, it set a noble examble of supreme sacrifice.

1923-24 was a critical period in the history of Indian nationalism. There was considerable deterioration in Hindu-Muslim relations and rise in communal tension leading to riots at some places. The power of the Muslim League had increased which obliged the nationalist Muslims to join hands to combat it.

All-India Muslim Nationalist Party

To counter the Muslim League programme against the Congress, the nationalist Muslims formed a party called the All-India Muslim Nationalist Party on 27 July 1929 with Abul Kalam Azad as President, Dr. Ansari as treasurer and T.A.K. Sherwani as Secretary. Its objective was to fight communalism and exhort Muslim to take their due share in India's struggle for freedom.

Khudai Khidmatgar Movement

Khudai Khidmatgars was an organization of the Pathans of the North-West Frontier Province which supported the Congress in its struggle for freedom. It was in September 1929 that Abdul Ghaffar Khan started the Frontier Provincial Youth League known as the *Naujavan-i-sarhad*, the Khudai Khidmatgars were a body of

volunteers forming part of the youth League which was intended to improve the religious, Financial and educational conditions of the people of the province. Perhaps due to its earlier association with the Communities its members wore Red Shirts but Abdul Ghaffar Khan came under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi and adopted the aims and objectives of the Congress in 1929. Since then this organization took part in all the activities of the Congress and followed its programme and policies.

Ahrar Movement

The nationalist Muslims started another organization called the All-India Majlis-i-Ahrar-i-Islam in 1931 to work for the attamment of independence through constitutional means. Its followers supported the Congress and worked for the economic, educational and political advancement of Muslims. The influence of the Ahrars was, however, mostly confined to the province of Punjab. The total numbers of Ahrars according to the official records was not more than 3,000 in 1946.

All Parties Muslim Unity Conference

The Ulemas and the nationalist Muslims constituted in 1933 what is known as the All-Parties Muslim Unity Conference with the avowed objectives of respect for Islam and to strive for unity with other communities and to organize various seats of Islam to play their role in the country's struggle for freedom. Its members included some followers of *Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind.* Shia community, and of the All-India Muslim Conference.

Swarajya Party

Meanwhile the reforms of 1919 had been put into effect and the legislative bodies had been enlarged. But there was a sharp difference of opinion among the Congress leaders over the question of participating in the Councils and other legislative bodies. Some of the important leaders such as C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru advocated "Council entry" for wrecking the Councils from within. The majority did not approve of it. Therefore the pre-Council group formed the Swarajya Party in 1923 with Deshbandhu C. R. Das as President and Motilal Nehru as Secretary. The new party contested the elections; they had some success in so far as they

were able to convince the Government that the system of diarchy introduced in the Provinces was unworkable. The main objective of wrecking the Councils from within, however, was not fulfilled and the influence of the Swarajya Party on Indian politics suffered a decline, especially after the death of C. R. Das in June 1925. It will be interesting to discuss in detail the rise and fall of this party which was, of course, an off-shoot of the Congress.

All Parties Conference

In reply to a challenge from the Secretary of State that India could not produce an agreed constitution, an All-Parties Conference under the Chairmanship of Pandit Motilal Nehru, prepared a scheme according to which India should be given Dominion Status by the end of 1929. The Congress accepted it but as there was no favourable response from the Government, the Congress at its session held at Lahore in December 1929, under the Presidentship of Jawaharlal Nehru declared that complete independence was the goal. This led to the lunching of the Civil Disobedience Movement by Gandhiji in March 1930. However, Gandhi-Irwin Pact led to suspension of the Movement and Congress participation in the Round Table-Conference in London.

Congress Socialist Party

The suspension of Civil Disobedience Movement in July 1933 led to the polarization of the Congress between the Right and the Left. Jawaharlal Nehru's speeches and writings at the time clearly showed his inclination towards the latter. The consolidation of the left forces became inevitable after the Conference of the Congress leaders at Delhi in 1934 when it was decided by the majority to revive the All-India Swarajya Party for the purpose of contesting elections to the Assemblies, Gandhiji too had given his approval to Council entry.

However, its General Secretary, Sampurnnand made it clear that "while drafting his tentative socialist programme he had consistently tried to keep before his eyes India's cultural, historical, political and economic background making no attempt to follow Leninism which recognized socialism as a secular concept comprehending such principles as the dictatorship of the proletariat; class war and the classless society.

The goal of his party was complete independence, Sampurnanand's programme included abolition of Zamindari with due compensation, nationalization of key industries, etc. The main leaders of the party were Acharya Narendra Deo, Jayaprakash Narayan, Abdul Bari, M. R. Masani, C. C. Banerji, Farid Huq, Ram Manohar Lohia, Mrs. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya and Achyut Patwardhan. This party was against the growing influence of the Communist Party. The Congress Socialist Party endorsed the stand of the Indian National Congress during World War II and refused to change its stand even after Russia Had Joined the Allies. Jayaprakash Narayan, as we all know, played such an important role in the Quit India Movement of 1942.

All India Communist Party

The influence of the Communist ideas made itself felt in India shortly after the Russian Revolution in 1917. And as early as 1920 the Communist Party of the USSR decided "to take concrete measures to spread revolution in the East." M. N. Roy a member of the Executive Committee of the Communist International was responsible for sending Indian communist trained in Russia to spread communist ideology in India and set up its centres. However his efforts met with no conspicuous success till the Communist Party of Britain took up the matter and sent some agents to India; Philip Spratt being the most important.

By 1924 the Communist propaganda had made considerable headway. The British Government felt alarmed and instituted the Cawnpore (Kanpur) Conspiracy case against some of the prominent leaders including S. A. Dange. Muzaffar Ahmed, Shaukat Usmani and Nalini Gupta who were all convicted and sent to jail. However, within a few years the Communist leaders in India with the help of the agents from Britain reorganized the Party and defined its goal as the overthrow of the British Government in India. A *Workers and Peasants Party* was formed in the United Provinces and its branches were also opened in Bombay and Bengal besides several towns of U.P.

The Trade Union formed under the auspices of the Communist Party continued to play an important role in demonstrations against the British Government. The main thesis of the Communist Party

in 1930s aimed at a proletariat urban revolution to start with and once it was achieved to extend it to rural areas. This was to be achieved through the transformation of individual strikes such as those of peasants against rents, debts, etc. into All-India movement and spread revolutionary propaganda amongst the police and the army. By these means the Communist also worked for the overthrow of the British rule and achieve independence for India.

The efforts of some of the Communist leaders as M. N. Roy to form a united front with congress leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose and Mahatma Gandhi for achieving Indian independence and the stiff opposition it encountered from others such as Adhikari, P.C.Joshi is an interesting subject of study for detailed and critical discussion. However, a leftist united front could not be formed due to the loyalty of the CPI to the Communist International.

The Communist policy of infiltration led to the resignation of such Congress socialists such as Masani, Ashok Mehta, Ram Manohar Lohia and Achyut Patwardhan. The communist Party, however, continued to lend its support to the mass movements launched by the Congress till 1942 when it decided to call off its agitation due to involvement of Russian in the was in support of the Allies. However, as the confidential records of the Government of India reveal that it remained linked with the main currents of nationalism to the extent possible. It took her six months to change from its anti-war policy to its new pro-war line and even then it did not give up its demand of independence of India from British rule.

Radical Democratic Party

A brief reference may be made here to the Radical Democratic Party formed by M. N. Roy in August 1940 after he left the Congress along with his followers. He believed that he would be able to convince the British Government to form coalition ministries by combining the anti Congress elements in the various provinces. The war, he thought would be prolonged and would thus leave the Britain exhausted. It would provide him with an opportunity to launch a mass movement and wrest power from the British. However, "his strenuous efforts to rope in anti war groups and

parties failed and the confidential note of the Government described him as a 'political adventurer' who had grown from a romantic terrorist and anti-British agitator into an ardent communist and anti-imperialist and now into an anti-fascist." He failed to persuade the Government to form coalition ministries but continued to help them in encouraging production by persuading the labourers not to go on strike.

All-India Trade Union Congress

In India, the national leaders soon came to realize the importance of industrial strikes to force the Government to meet their political demands. As early as 1908 the followers of Tilak had created a great furor among the mull workers of Bombay by informing that the leader had been arrested for advocating their cause.

The first All-India Trade Union Congress was, however, inaugurated in Bombay in December 1920 by Swami Shradhanand and was presided over by Lajpat Rai. The Congress continued to meet annually and even representatives from abroad attended some of its sessions. The Communists had no doubt gained considerable influence in this organization but were not able to get support for their stand in 1942. But by 1943 when the membership of the AITUC rose to 4,70,000 workers organize in 401 unions, the Communists representation stood at 70 per cent.

Hindustan Mazdur Sevak Sangh

Gulzarilal Nanda who looked after the Congress interests in the organization announced the formation of the *Hindustan Mazdur Sevak Sangh* with the concurrence of Gandhiji, Vallabhbhai Patel was to be the President. Every member was enjoined to sign a pledge which forbade association with any party which countenanced the use of violent means or aimed at the establishment of dictatorial or sectional control of the political or economic life of the country. It clearly excluded the communists who might have been the ordinary members of the Congress. Thus the Congress had clearly marked its entry in the labour field. Its leaders now made full use of the pro-war attitude of the Communists and won over considerable following in the labour circles.

Forward Bloc

Soon after his resignation from the Presidentship of the Indian National Congress on 3 May 1939. Subhas Chandra Bose formed what is known as the Forward Bloc. Its main objective was attainment of complete independence and establishment of a modern socialist state, promoting social ownership and state control of large-scale industrial production for economic development, freedom of worship, social justice and equal rights for individuals regardless of creed or sex. It became a party at its Nagpur session on 18 June, 1940 and attempted a form a left consolidated front but the Communist Party of India and the Congress Socialist Party did not join it. However, it collaborated with the All-India Kisan Sabha and was against any compromise with the British Government. In the then prevailing situation, it advocated collaboration with Italy, Germany and Japan to get rid of the imperialists British rule.

All-India Kisan Sabha

The All India Kisan Sabha, mainly a peasants' organization with Swami Sahajanand as its President was subject to the influence of Congress Socialist Party and the Communist Party of India. During the World War II it followed its programme of no-tax campaign, occupation of Bakasht land in Bihar; travel in railways without tickets and anti-recruitment drive in the rural areas. It completely aligned itself with the Forward Bloc and stood for no compromise with the imperialist British Government and complete independence.

8

Some Prominent Martyrs of India's Freedom Struggle

The history of our freedom struggle is replete with acts of courage, sacrifice and dedication to the cause of freedom. The heroes of our freedom struggle came from every nook and corner of the country. They did not speak one language; they did not belong to one religion or one caste. An intense love for their country and a keen desire to see it free permeated all their existence. Some of them laid down their lives and immortalized themselves in the annals of our freedom struggle. It is difficult to enumerate the names of all these patriots as a number of them would always remain anonymous and their names will never find mention in the pages of history. In the three volumes of "Who's who of Indian Martyrs'[brought out by the Ministry of Education, list about 10,000 names of persons who were hanged or killed from 1857 to the emancipation of our country in 1947. Included in these volumes are also those patriots who struggled for liberation in the princely states of Hyderabad, Jammu and Kashmir and the Portuguese territories of Goa, Daman and Diu. We reproduce the life-sketches of some of the important martyrs from these volumes and do hope that it will serve as a source of inspiration to the coming generations.

ABDUL KHADIR MOHAMMED: b. May 25, 1917, at v. vakkom, Distt. Trivandrum, Kerala; s. of Shri Vavakunju; Ed. Upto Matriculation. Took part in the popular movement for responsible government in Travancore State (1938). Went to Malaya before the Second World War. Joined the Indian National Army in Malaya in 1942. Given and intelligence assignment and sent to

India by submarine. Landed on the Calicut coast early in 1942, but was detected and arrested by the British authorities. Charged with spying for a foreign power and sentenced to death. Hanged in the Madras Penitentiary on September 10, 1943.

ALLURI SITARAMA RAJU: b. July 4, 1897, at v. Mogallu, Distt. West Godavari, Andhra Pradesh; s. of Shri Venkatarama Raju; Organized the tribal people in Visakhapatnam Agency for a political struggle against the British rulers. Atrocities committed by the British police and officials led him to organize and armed rebellion against the British, known as the Rampa rebellion. The tribal patriots, led by him, launched several successful attacks against the British police. An expert strategist and able guerrilla leader, he posed a serious challenge to British authority. A reward of Rs. 10,000 was announced for his arrest. The cruel British reprisals against the tribal people and their mounting misery impelled him to surrender. A just and chivalrous man, he expected a fair trial and recognition of his people's rights. He was treacherously shot dead by the British police on May 7, 1924.

AMIR CHAND, MASTER: b. 1869 at Delhi, s. of Shri Hukam Chand Vaishya; School teacher; Took active part in social reform and educational activities, such as widow remarriage, temperance and spread of education. Prominent worker in the Swadeshi Movement. Contact with the famous revolutionary leader, Lala Har Dayal, brought him into the revolutionary movement. Became leader of the Ghadar Party. Worked in close collaboration with Rash Behari Bose and directed revolutionary activities in the whole of northern India. Arrested in February 1914 on the charge of conspiracy to kill Lord Hardinge, the Viceroy of India, and also accused of complicity in the Lahore Bomb Case. Known as the Delhi Conspiracy Case, it started with the throwing of a bomb on Lord Hardinge while he was passing on an elephant through Delhi's Chandni Chowk in State procession marking the inauguration of Delhi as the Capital of India. Sentenced to death of October 5, 1914, along with his three compatriots – Avadh Bihari, Bal Mokand and Basant Kumar Biswas. Died on the gallows on May 8, 1915, in the Delhi Central Jail.

ARUR SINGH: b 1890 at v. Singhwal, Distt. Jullundur, Punjab: s. of Shri Pal Singh: Ed. Upto middle standard; Took part in

nationalist activities against British rule. Worked for the Revolutionary Party. Damaged railway track and telephone lines to disrupt communications. Shot and killed several policemen and an informer. Took part in the revolutionary plan to throw a bomb on the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, at Delhi. Remained underground for 18 months. Arrested in November 1916 at Chuhla Sahib. Sentenced to death. Died on the gallows in the Lahore Jail in December 1916.

ASHFAQULLAH KHAN: b. October 1900 at Shahijahanpur, Uttar Pradesh; s. of Shri Shafequllah; Ed. Upto eighth standard; Student: Took active part in nationalist activities against British rule. Member of the revolutionary organization called Matrivedi Sanstha. Participated in the Kakori Mail Decoity on August 9, 1925, and in raids by the revolutionaries at Sherganj, Bichpuri and Mainpuri, etc. Arrested and sentenced to death. Died on the gallows in the Faizabad Jail on April 3, 1927.

AVADH BIHARI: b. 1889 at Delhi; s. of Shri Govind Lal; Teacher; Took active part in nationalist activities against British rule. Member of the Revolutionary Party. Directed revolutionary activities in Uttar Pradesh and Punjab. Associate of Rash Behari Bose. Participated in the plot to throw a bomb on Lord Hardinge, the Viceroy of India. Known as the Delhi Conspiracy, it was carried out on December 23, 1912, when Lord Hardinge was passing through Chandni Chowk, Delhi, in a State procession marking the inauguration of Delhi as the capital of India. Arrested in February 1914 and charged with conspiracy to kill Lord hardinge and also accused of complicity in the explosion of a bomb in the Lawrence Garden, Lahore, on May 17, 1913. Tried along with his three compatriots – Amir Chand, Balmokand and Basant Kumar Biswas. Sentenced to death. Died on the gallows in the Ambala Central Jail on May 11, 1915.

AZAD, CHANDRA SHEKHAR: b. July 23, 1906, at v. Bhaora, Distt. Jhabua, Madhya Pradesh; s. of Shri Sitaram Tewari. His ancestors originally hailed from v. Badarka, Distt. Unnao, Uttar Pradesh; Student of the Banaras Sanskrit College and later of the Kashi Vidyapeeth; Took part in the Non-cooperation Movement (1921). Arrested at the age of 14 years and punished with fifteen cane strokes. In his court statement, he described his own name as "Azad", his father as "Swadhin" and his address as "the jail". After release, hailed as a young hero. Joined the Indian Revolutionary Party in 1922. Member of the "Hindustan Socialist Republican Army". Took part in several political dacoities", including the "kakori Mail Dacoity". Declared and absconder and was hunted by the police. Carried a reward of Rs. 30,000 for his capture. Remained underground for several years. Attended the meeting of the Revolutionary Party on September 8, 1928, at Delhi. Appointed "commander of the Military Division" of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association. To avenge the death of Lala Lajpat Rai, he organized, along with Sardar Bhagat Singh and Rajguru, the shooting of British Police Superintendent, J.A. Scott, at Lahore, Scott escaped and the Asstt. Superintendent of Police, J.P. Saunders, was killed. Planned the bomb explosion in the Central Legislative Assembly on April 8, 1929. Successfully evaded arrest by the police for about two years. Betrayed by a companion and surrounded by the police in the Alfred Park at Allahabad on February 27, 1931. Fought along against the big police party with revolvers in both hands. Killed several policemen and wounded the British Police Superintendent, Nott-Bower, the Indian police officer, Bisheshwar Singh. Died fighting the police on February 27, 9131, after his arm and leg had been riddled with bullets.

BARHAT PRATAP SINGH: b. May 25, 1893, at Shahpura, Distt. Bhilwara, Rajasthan; s. of Shri Kesri Singh Barhat; Matriculate; Active political worker; Took a prominent part in the revolutionary movement against British rule in India. Joined the Revolutionary Party as a follower of Shri Rash Behari Bose. Participated in the revolutionary plot to throw a bomb on Lord Hardinge, Viceroy of India, on December 3, 1912. His uncle, Shri Zorawar Singh was also a member of this group. Arrested as an accused in the Banaras Conspiracy Case and sentenced, in February 1916, to five years' R.I. Subjected to brutal physical torture in the Bareilly Central Jail in order to force him to divulge the names of his compatriots. He firmly refused and continued to suffer the torture until his death on May 7, 1917.

BABA LAKHU RAM: b. 1870 at Pakpattan, Distt. Montgomery, Punjab (now in West Pakistan); Businessman; Took active part in

the non-cooperation Movement (1921) and dedicated himself to social work. Propagated the ideals of "swadeshi"and agitated for the boycott of foreign goods. Participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement (1930). Arrested in August 1930 and imprisoned in the Montgomery Central Jail. Went on hunger-strike on December 7, 1930, in protest against the brutal treatment of political prisoners in the Jail. The jail authorities put him in solitary confinement. He reacted by refusing to take even water from that day. Resisted forced feeding and died on December 13, 1930.

BHAGAT SINGH: b. September 28, 1909, at v. Banga, Distt. Lyallpur (now in West Pakistan); s. of Shri Kishan Singh and Shrimati Vidyawati; Student of the National College, Lahore; Joined the revolutionary movement in 1924. When only sixteen years of age. Refused to marry and dedicated his life to the liberation of India. Bounded the Hindustan Socialist Republican Army, along with other revolutionary leaders. Organized revolutionary activities in Punjab, Delhi and U.P. Planned agitation against the Simon Commission and its recommendations. Attempted to rescue his revolutionary comrades. Shri Jogesh Chatterji and Shri S. N. Sanyal, from the Kanpur Jail, where they were detained in connection with the Kakori Mail Decoity Case. Drew up the plan to shoot. J. A. Scott, Senior Superintendent of Police at Lahore, who had ordered the assault on Lala Lajpat Rai during the demonstration against the Simon Commission at Lahore in November 1928. Shot and killed J. P. Saunders, Assistant Superintendent of Police, on December 17, 1929. Exploded a bomb in the Central Legislative Assembly at Delhi on April 8, 1929, and scattered leaflets. Arrested and sentenced to transportation for life. A special tribunal later enhanced the sentence to one of death by hanging. His two comrades, Sukhdev and Shivram Rajguru, were also sentenced to death. Died fearlessly on the gallows in the Lahore Central Jail on March 23, 1931. Sukhdev and Shivram Rajguru were also executed along with him.

BAKHSHISH SINGH: b. at v. Gillwai, Distt. Amritsar, Punjab; s. of Shri Santa Singh; Took part in nationalist activities against British rule. Member of the Revolutionary Party. Took part in the Lahore Bomb Conspiracy in 1915. Arrested and detained. Sentenced to death. Died on the gallows in the Lahore Jail on November 16, 1915. His entire property was confiscated.

BAL, HARIGOPAL: b. at v. Kanungopara, Distt. Chittagong, Bengal (now in East Pakistan); s. of Shri Pran Krishna Bal; Took active part in nationalist activities against British Rule, Member of the Revolutionary Party. Participated in the Chattagong Armour Raid on April 18, 1930. escaped after the raid. Died on April 22, 1930. Received bullet would while fighting against British solders on the Jalalabad Hill, on April 22, 1930. Died the same day.

BAL PRABHAS CHANDRA: b. at v. Dhorla, Distt. Chittagong, Bengal (now in east Pakistan); s. of Shri Monomohan Bal; Took active part in nationalist activ ities against British rule. Member of the Revolutionary Party. Participated in the Chittagong Armour Raid on April 18, 1930. Received bullet wound while fighting against British soldiers on the Jalalabad Hill, on April 22, 1930. Died the same day.

BALMOKAND: b. 1889 at v. Khariala, Distt. Jhelum, Punjab (now in West Pakistan); s. of Shri Bhai Mathura Das; Arts graduate; Teacher; Took part in nationlist activities against British rule. Member of the Revolution Party. Prepared and distributed literature calling for a revolt against the British rulers. Trained in the use of arms and throwing of bombs. Arrested in February 1914 on the charge of conspiring to kill Lord Hardinge, the Viceroy of India, by throwing a bomb while the Viceroy was passing in a State procession through Chandi Chowk, Delhi, on December 23, 1921, to mark the inauguration of Delhi as the capital of India. Also accused of complicity in a bomb explosion in the Lawrence Garden, Lahore, on May 17, 1913. Sentenced to death on October 5, 1914. Died on the gallows in the Ambala Central Jail on May 11, 1915.

BALWANT SINGH: b. 1883 at v. Khurdpur, Distt. Jullunder, Punjabl s. of Shri Budh Singh; Member of the Ghadar Party. Went to the United States of America in 1911 but was not allowed to land at San Francisco. Arrested and charged with the murder of Canadian Emigration Inspector, Hopkinson, who had been actively working against the Indian Sikh Community in Canada. Arrested again in 1915 at Bankok and handed over to the British Government. Triad as the Principal accused in the Lahore Conspiracy which aimed at overthrowing British rule through an

armed revolt. Sentenced to death. Died on the gallows in the Lahore Jail in 1916.

BANERJI, MANINDRA NATH: b. at Banaras, Uttar Pradesh; a. of Dr. Tara Charan Banerjee; Took active part in the nationalist movement against British rule. Member of the Revolutionary Party. Shot and killed his maternal uncle, Shri J. N. Banerji, who was the Dy. Supdt. Of Police in-charge of investigation in the Kakori Conspiracy Case. Arrested and sentenced to 10 years' R. I. Died in the Fatehgarh Central Jain on June 20, 1934, after completing 66 days of his hunger-strike against brutal treatment.

BARDHAN, SATYENDRA CHANDRA: b. at Bitghar, Distt. Comilla, Bengal (now in East Pakistan); s. of Shri Dinesh Chandra Bardhan; Joined the Indian Independence League in Malaya in 1941. Enlistef in the Indian National Army 1942. Trained in radio communication and revolutionary work. Landed by submarine on the Kathiawar coast. Captured a few hours later and detained in the Madras Fort. Sentenced to death on the charge of spying for an "enemy power". Died on the gallows in the Madras Penitentiary on September 10, 1943.

BASU BENOY KRISHNA: b. September 11, 1908, at v. Rautbhog, Distt. Dacca, Bengal (now in East Pakistan); s. of Shri Rebati Mohan Basu; Medical Student; Took active part in the nationalist movement. Member of the Revolutionary Party. Shot dead Lowman L. G. of Police and Hodson, Supdt. Of Police, in th Armanitola Medical School at Dacca on August, 29, 1930. Escaped arrest and was declared an absconder with a reward for his arrest. Took a leading part in the killing of Simspon, Inspector-General Prisons, in the Writers Building, Calcutta, on December 8, 1930. Caught in the firing by his comrades and seriously wounded. Arrested the same day and tortured by the police. Died in the Calcutta Medical College Hospital on December 13, 1930.

BASU, SATYENDRANATH: Resident of Midnapur, West Bengal; s. of Shri Abhay Charan Basu; Teacher in a Government School; Took active part in nationalist movement. Member of the Revolutionary Party and one of the founders of Ananda Math, a revolutionary secret society at Midnapur, Organized the agitation against the partition of Bengal and actively worked for the Swadeshi Movement. Dismissed from Government service in April 1906. Arrested on June 28, 1908, on the charge of involvement in the Muzaffarpur Bomb Case and in the Alipur Bomb Case. Sentenced to R. I. Participated in the killing of the approver, Narendra Gossain, in the Alipur jail, Sentenced to death. Died on the gallows in the Alipur Central Jail on November 21, 1908.

BISMIL, RAM PRASAD: b. at Shanjahanpur, Uttar Pradesh; s. of Shri Marlidhar Tewari; High School Studen; Took active part in the nationalist movements. Members of the revolutionary organization known as the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association. Participated in the Kakori Mail Decoity on August 9, 1925, and in raids by the revolutionaries at Sherganj, Bichpuri and Mainpuri, etc. Arrested and sentenced to death. Died on the gallows in the Gorakhpur District Jail on December 19, 1927.

BOSE, KHUDIRAM: b. December 3, 1889, at Midnapur, West Bengal; s. of Shri Trailokya Nath Bose; Student of ninth standard; Gave up studies to join the swadeshi Movement, Became member of the Revolutionary Party. Distributed a pamphlet entitled Bende Mataram. Worked actively in the protest movement against the partition of Bengal in 1905. Arrested on February 28, 1906 but escaped after assaulting the policemen. Arrested again in April and finally released on May 16, 1906. Took part in the looting og mail-bags at Hatgachha in 1907. Participated in the bomb attack on the Bengal Governor's special train near the Naravangarh railway station on December 6, 1907, and was involved in the attempted killing of two Englishmen-Wastson and Bamfylde Fuller – in 1908. Organised a plot, in collaboration with Prafulla Chaki, to kill Kingsford, Sessions Judge at Muzaffarpur, Bihar, for avenging the harsh sentences passed by him against nationalist patriots at Calcutta. Threw bomb, on April 30, 1908, at Kingsford's carriage which happened to be carrying a European lady, Mrs. Kennedy, and her daughter. Both of them were killed by mistake. Arrested at Waini railway station and tried for murder. Sentenced to death. Died on the gallows in the Muzaffarpur Jail on August 11, 1908.

CHAKI, PRAFULLA KUMAR ALIAS DINESH CHANDRA RAY: b. in Distt. Bogra, East Bengal (now in East Pakistan); s. of Shri Raj Narayan Chaki; Student; Member of Revolutionary Party. Took part in the plot to kill Kingsford, the Sessions Judge at

Muzaffarpur, Bihar, Reached Muzaffarpur along with Khudiram Bose. The bomb thrown by them at Kingsford's carriage on May 1, 1908; killed a European lady, Mrs. Kennedy, and her daughter. Chased by the police, he committed suicide the same day by shooting with his own revolver in order to avoid arrest. Khudiram Bose was arrested and later hanged to death.

CHAPHEKAR, BALKRISHNA: b. 1873 at CHinchwad, Distt Poona, Maharashtra; s. of Shri Hari Chaphekar, Good education in Marathi; Took part in political and revolutionary activities against British rule. Worked with his brother, Damodar Chaphekar, in imparting military training to patriotic Indian youths for overthrowing British rule. Helped in the ploan to kill Mr. Rand, Plague Commissioner of Poona, against whom there was great popular resentment. Arrested and tried. Sentenced to death. Died on the gallows in the Yervada Jail, Poona, on May 12, 1899.

CHAPHEKAR, DAMODAR: b. June 24, 1869, at Chinchwad, Distt. Poona, Maharashtra; s. of Shri Hari Chaphekar; Good education in Marathi; Took a prominent part in political activities. Organized a society for promoting physical culture and imparting military training to patriotic youngmen with the purpose of overthrowing British rule. Along with his brothers, Balkrishan Chaphekar and Vasudev Chaphekar, he made a plan to kill Mr. Rand, the British Plague Commissioner in Poona Intense popular resentment had been aroused against Mr. Rand due to his harsh measures for forcibly evacuating the people from Poona during the plague epidemic in 1897. They attacked Mr. Rand at night while he was returning from the Govt. House after participating in the 60th anniversary celebrations of Queen Victoria's Coronation, held on June 22, 1897. Mr. Rand was killed and also another Englishman. Lt. Ayerst, who was passing that way. Arrested and tried, he was sentenced to death. Died on the gallows in the Yervada Jail, Poona on April 18,1898.

CHAPHEKAR, VASUDEV: b. 1880 at Chinchwad, Distt. Poona, Maharashtra; s. of Shri Hari Chaphekar; Good education in Marathi; Took part in political and revolutionary activities against the British. Collaborated with his brothers, Damodar and Balkrishan Chaphekar, in their work for imparting military training to patriotic Indian youths. Helped in the killing of Mr. Rand, the

Plague Commissioner of Poona, as an act of vengeance for his harsh treatment of the people in Poona. Arrested and tried. Sentenced to death. Died on the gallows in the Yervada Jail, Poona on May 8, 1899.

CHAUDHURI, PROMODE RANJAN: b. 1904 at Kelisahar, Distt. Chittagong, Bengal (now in East Pakistan); s. of Shri Ishan Chandra Chaudhuri; Student; Joined the revolutionary society, called the Anusilan Samiti, at Chittagong in 1920; Took part in the Non-Co-operation Movement (1921). Participated in revolutionary activities. Arrested in connection with the Dakshineswar Bomb Case. Sentenced to R.I. in 1925. Killed the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Bhupendra Nath Chatterjee, on May 28, 1927, in the Alipur Jail. Sentenced to death; Died on the gallows on September 28, 1926.

DAS, JATINDRA NATH: b. 1904; Resident of Calcutta, West Bengal; s. of Shri Bankim Chandra Das; Took active part in the nationalist movement against British rule. Member of the Revolutionary Party. Arrested on June 14, 1929, for complicity in the "Lahore Conspiracy Case" connected with bomb explosion in the Lawrence Garden, Lahore, killing a peon. Detained in the Lahore Central Jail. Went on hunger-strike in protest against the brutal treatment of political prisoners. Died in the Lahore Jail on September 13, 1929, after fasting for 63 days.

DAS GUPTA, NIRENDRA NATH: b. 1896 at v. Madaripur, Distt. Faridpur (now in east Pakistan); s. of Shri Lalit Mohan Das Gupta; Member of the Revolutionary Party. Arrested for complicity in the Faridpur Conspiracy Case of 1913. Released after serving jail sentence. Shot and killed Nirode Haldar, a C.I.D. officer, at Calcutta in 1915. Participated in the revolutionary plan to unload arms and ammunition from the German ship Maverick on the Orissa coast. Wounded and arrested in teh encounter with the armed police at Kaptipoda, Distt. balasore, Orissa, on September 9, 1915. Tried and sentenced to death. Died on the gallows in the Balasore Jail on October 1915.

DASTIDAR, TARAKESWAR: b. at v. Saroatali, Distt. Chittagong, Bengal (now in East Pakistan); s. of Shri Chandramohan Dastidar; Member of the Revolutionary Party. Injured in 1930 in an explosion while manufacturing bombs. Took

part in the Chittagong Armour Raid in 1930. Became leader of the "Indian Republican Army" after the arrest of his chief, Surya Sen. Directed revolutionary activities while underground. Arrested on May 18, 1933, after an armed encounter with the police in the house of Purna Talukdar at Gahira. Sentenced to death, Died on the gallows in the Chittagong District Jail on January 12, 1934.

DHANSHETTI, MALLAPPA: b. 1898 at Sholapur, Maharashtra; s of Shri Revansidhappa Dhanshetti; Ed. Upto Sixth standard; Employed in a private firm; Took active part in the Civil Disobedience Movement (1930) as a prominent and influential political worker of Sholapur. Let a procession of people protesting against the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi on May 8, 1930. The police fired on the procession and several people were killed. In the resulting clash between the police and the demonstrators, one police constable was killed and another burnt alive. Martial Law was clamped in Sholapur and he was arrested along with other leaders. Tried for rioting and murder. Sentenced to death and a fine of Rs. 2000. Died on the gallows in the Yervada Jail, Poona, on January 12, 1931.

DHINGRA, MADAN LAL: b. in Punjab; Studied at Amritsar and Lahore and then wsnt to England. Joined the University College of Engineering at London in 1906. Took part in Indian revolutionary activities in Britain. Undertook training in the use of fire-arms. Shot and killed Col. William Curzon wyllie political A.D.C. in the India Office, at a gathering in the Imperial Institute, London. Declared it to be an act of "humble revenge for the inhuman hangings and transportation of patriotic Indian youths." Arrested and tried for murder. Sentenced to death. Died on gallows at the Pentonville Prison, London, on August 17, 1909.

GUPTA DINESH: b. Dicember 6, 1911, at v. Jasholong, Distt. Dacca, Bengal (now in East Pakistan); s. of Shri Satish Chandra Gupta; Member of the Revolutionary Party. Took part in the shooting of Simpson. Inspector-General of Prisons. In the writers' Building, Calcutta, on December 8, 1930. wounded in the attempt to commit suicide. Arrested and tried for murder. Brutally tortured in jail. Sentenced to death. Died on the gallows in the presidency Jail, Calcutta, on July 7, 1931.

HAJRA, (SMT.) MATANGINI: b. 1870 at v. Hogla, Distt. Midnapur, West Bengal; Widow of Shri Trilochan Hajra; Took part I nationalist activities during the Civil Disobedience Movement (1930). Participated in the Salt Satyagraha and in the agitation against the Chowkidari Tax in 1930. Arrested in 1932 for shouting "Go back" at the Bengal Government during a Durbar at Tamluk. Released after serving the sentence of 6 months' R. I. Resumed political and social work. Took part in the Quit India Movement (1942). Led a procession to the Remluk Civil Court for hoisting the tricolour on September 29, 1942. Received bullet wound in firing by a military unit. Died on the spot with the tricolour in her hand.

HARI KRISHAN: b. June 1909 at v. Ghalladher, Distt. Mardan, North West Frontier Province (now in West Pakistan); s. of Shri Gurdas Mal; Student; Took active part in the Khudai Khidmatgar Movement and the Naujawan Bharat Sabha, a revolutionary society. Participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement (1930). Made plan to shoot and kill the Governor of Punjab, Sir Geoffrey De Montmorrency. Carried out the plan and shot at the Governor at the annual convocation of the Punjab University at Lahore on December 23, 1930. The Governor was wounded and a police officer was killed. Arrested and tried for conspiracy and murder. Sentenced to death. Died on the gallows in the Mianwali jail on June 9, 1931.

KALANI HEMU: b. March 11, 1924, at Sikkur, Sind (now in West Pakistan); s. of Shri Pesumal Kalani; Ed. Upto Matriculation, Student; Member of many organizations working for independence. Took a prominent part in the "Swarajya Sena" in Sind which was founded by Dr. Mangharam with the aim of inculcating discipline among the youth and inspiring them to work for the country's freedom. Took active part in the Quit India Movement (1942). Distributed anti-British leaflets and bulletins. Removed fish-plates of railway track near Sukkur on the night of October 23, 1942, in order to derail a British military train carrying troops to be used for crushing the nationalist agitation. Arrested on the spot. Tried by court martial and sentences to imprisonment for life. Later, a higher military court enhanced the life sentence to one of death by hanging. Died on the gallows in the Sukkur Central Jail on January 21, 1943.

KENHERE, ANANT: b. 1891 at Indore; s. of Shri Laxman Kanhere; Ed. Upto sixth standard; Student; Took part in political activities against British rule. Member of the revolutionary society called Abhinav Bharat. One of the main accused in the "Jackson Murder Conspiracy" of Nasik. In collaboration with Vinayak Narayan Deshpande and Krishnaji Karve, he carried out the plan. Shot and killed Jackson, the District Magistrate of Nasik, on December 2, 1908. It was done to avenge the harsh sentence passed by Jackson, on Ganesh Vinayak Sarvarkar. Arrested and tried. Sentenced to death. Died on the gallows in the Thana Jail of April 19, 1910.

KHANDUA, PRITAM: b. May 1894 at Fort Sundayman. Baluchistan (now in West Pakistan); s. of Shri Mengha Khandua; Matriculate; Joined the revolutionary party known as the Kranti Dal and took active part in anti-British activities. Arrested at Jammu and tried on the charge of shooting a police constable. Sentenced to death. Died on the gallows in the Montgomery Central Jail on May 18, 1934.

KONWAR, KUSAL: b at Saruppathar, Golaghat Sub-Division, Assam; Ed. Upto seventh standard; Tea estate employee and President, Sarupathar Congress Committee; Took part in the Civil Disobedience Movement (1930) and in the Quit India Movement (1942). Arrested on suspicion of involvement in the derailment of the British military train near the Sarupathar railway station on October 9,1942. Tried on a charged of sabotage. Sentenced to death. Died on the gallows in the Jorhat Jail on June 16, 1943.

LAHIRI, RAJENDRA NATH: b. 1892 at v. Mohanpur, Distt. Pabna, Bengal (now in East Pakistan); Resident of Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh; s. of Shri Kshitish Mohan Lahiri; Owner of a big estate; Took active part in nationalist activities against British rule. Member of revolutionary organization called the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association. Arrested and sentenced to imprisonment in the Dakshineswar Bomb Case. Participated in the Kakori Mail Dacoity on August 9, 1925. and in raids by the revolutionaries at Sherganj, Bilchpuri and Mainpuri, etc. Arrested and sentenced to death. Died on the gallows in the Gonda Jail on December, 17, 1927.

MATHRA SINGH (Dr.): b. at v. Dhudial, Distt. Jhelum, Punjab (now in West Pakistan); s. of Shri Hari Singh; Chemist; Joined the revolutionary movement and went to San Francisco, U.S.A. in July 1913 to work for the Ghadar Party. Went to Shanghai, China, in December 1913 for preparing and disseminating anti-British literature. Visited Germany and Afghanistan in connection with the revolutionary work and secretly entered India again. Worked at the secret head-quarters of the revolutionary party in Amritsar and prepared bombs. His presence was detected by the British Indian Police and a prize of Rs. 2,000 was announced for his arrest. Captured by the police and tried for 'treason'. Sentenced to death in March 1917. died on the gallows.

MITRAM ANANTAHARI: b. 1906 at v. Begumpur, Distt. Nadia, West Bengal; s. of Shri Ram Lal Mitra; Took part in the Non-Cooperation Movement (1921). Joined the Revolutionary Party and organized revolutionary activities at Krishnagar. Prepared bombs at Dakshineswar. Arrested on November 10, 1925, as an accused in the Dakshineswar Bomb Case. Sentenced to imprisonment for life. Killed Bhupen Chatterjee, the Deputy-Superintendent of Police, while in jail. Tried for murder and sentenced to death. Died on the gallows in the Alipur Central Jail on September 28, 1926.

PATHAK, SOHAN LAL: B. January 7, 1883, at v. Patti, Distt. Amritsar, Punjab; s. of Shri Chanda Ram; Ed. Upto middle standard; Primary school teacher; Took keen interest in nationalist activities. Resigned from the teaching job as a protest against the Head Master's order to break off his contacts with Lala Lajpat Rai and other leaders. Became Joint Editor of the Urdu journal *Bandemataram* under Lala Lajpat Rai. Went to Thailand, the Philippines and the U.S.A. IN 1914. joined the Ghadar Party in California, U.S.A. Took up the assignment of creating revolt among the Indian soldiers of the British army stationed in Burma, Malaya and Singapore, Indian soldiers in Singapore revolted in March 1915, but were brutally put down and arrested. Many were shot dead. Arrested in August 1915 in Burma while trying to organize an uprising. Tried for conspiring against the Government and sentenced to death. Died on the gallows in the Mandalay Jail (Burma) of February 10, 1916.

PHADKE, VASUDEV: b. November 4.1845, at Shirdhon, Distt. Kolaba, Maharashtra; Ed. Upto primary standard; Government servant; Tried to organized a national revolt against the British. Successfully recruited a large number of followers from the Remoshi tribe in Bombay Presidency and built up an armed force. Attached British installations and communications and seized money from a few Government Treasuries. The British considered him a dangerous enemy. Carried on his activities for a number of years until he was captured by the British on July 3, 1879. Sentenced to transportation for life, he was sent to Aden and kept in detention under inhuman conditions. Died on February 17, 1883, after undertaking a fast unto death.

PINGLE, VISHNU GANESH: b. January 1888 at v. Talegaon, Distt. Poona, Maharashtra; Engineering graduate from the University of Seattle, U.S.A.; Member of the Indian Revolutionary Party. Took active part in organizing a revolt against the British in the armed forces. Traveled throughout the country under various pseudonyms. Visited Meerut Military cantonment, in March 1915 to contact Indian solders. Arrested on March 23, 1915, with high-explosive bombs in his possession. Charged with conspiring to "create disaffection" among the army solders and conspiring to overthrow British rule. Sentenced to death along with 23 others. The death sentences of 17 of them were commuted to imprisonment for life in November 1915. Died on the fallows in the Lahore Central Jail on November 17, 1915. Six of his comrades – Sikh soldiers in the Army – were also executed the same day in the Lahore Central jail.

RAJGURU, SHIVRAM: b. at Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh; s. of Shri Hari Rajguru of Poona; Member of the Revolutionary Party. Took a leading part in revolutionary activities against British rule. Close associate of the revolutionary leader, Bhagat Singh. Took part in the shooting of J. P. Saunders, Assistant Superintendent of Police, at Lahore on December 17, 1928. Arrested on September 30, 1929, in a motor garage in Poona. Tried as one of the principal accused in the Lahore Conspiracy Case of 1930. Sentenced to death. Died on the gallows in the Lahore Central Jail on March 23. 1931. along with Bhagat Singh and Sukhdev.

RAM RAKHA: b. at Hoshiarpur, Punjab; Took a prominent part in revolutionary activities against British Rule. Member of the Ghadar Party. Worked in association with Lala Sohan Lal Pathak for creating a revolt among Indian soldiers of the British army in Burma, Malaya and Singapore. Arrested in Burma in 1915 and tried as one of the principal accused in the Mandalay Supplementary trial. Sentenced to transportation for life and imprisoned in the Andaman Cellular Jail. Subjected to inhuman torture by the jail authorities. Died in 1919 after being on hunger-strike for several days.

RANADE, MAHADEO: b. 1880 in Maharashtra; s. of Shri Vinayak Ranade; Student of the Government Science College, Poona; Took active part in nationalist activities against British rule. Associated with the Chjaphekar brothers in imparting physical training to Indian youth. Helped them in the shooting of two British officers, Rand and Lt. Ayerst. Assisted Vasudeo Chaphekar in the shooting og two police informers, Ganesh and Ramchang. Made the bullets used in the shooting. Arrested and tried for murder. Sentenced to death. Died on the gallows in the Yervada Central Jail, Poona, on May 10, 1899.

RATTAN SINGH: b. in Punjab; Took active part in the Babbar Akali movement. Arrested in April 1932 along with ten other Akalis. Attacked the escorting police p[arty in the railway train near Bhatinda and escaped. A reward of Rs. 3,000 was announced for his arrest. Surrounded by the police in a hut in Rurki village, Distt. Hoshiarpur. Fought against the police and killed three policemen. Received several bullet wounds and died before the police could arrest him.

RAUT, BAJI: b. 1925 at v. Nilkanthapur Distt. Dhenkanal, Orissa; s. of Shri Hari Raut; Boatman and volunteer of the Praja Mandal in the Dhenkanal State; Undertook the task of keeping vigil of the movements of the state police and troops at the Nilkanthapur Ghat on the Brahmini river during the reign of terror let loose against the people by the State authorities in 1938. on the right of October 10, 1938, a number of policemen and soldiers tried to force him to take them across the river in his boat. The twelve-year-old boy refused to do so and told them that they were enemies of the people. A soldier struck him on his head with

the butt of his gun and his skull was fractured. Despite his serious injuries, he raised an alarm and warned the villagers about the arrival of the soldiers and policemen. He died the same night due to excessive loss of blood. A mob of villagers collected at the ghat and tried to prevent the soldiers from crossings the river. Several villagers were killed in firing by the troops. The bravery and patriotism of young Baji Raut has been immortalized in the poem "Boatman" by the famous Oriya poet, Sachi Routray.

RAY CHAUDHURI, CHITTAPRIYA: Resident of Madaripur, Bengal (now in East Pakistan); Student; Joined the Revolutionary Party and took active part in the execution of its plans. Arrested in December 1930 for complicity in the Faridpur Conspiracy. Released in April 1914. Worked in close association with the well-known revolutionary, Jatin Mukherji. Took active part in Jatin's plan to obtain arms and ammunition from Gernamy, Japan, the United States of America and the Dutch East Indies. Went to Balasore (Orissa) with his leader, Jatin, and his comrades Narendra Das Gupta and Manaranjan Sen Gupta in September 1915 to take delivery of arms from the German ship Maverick His group was intercepted by the armed police at kaptipoda on the bank of the river Buribalam on September 9, 1915. Received bullet wound during the encounter with the police that day and died.

SAHA, GOPI NATH: b. at Serampore, Distt. Hooghly, West Bengal; s. of Shri Bejoy Krishna Saha; Student; Member of the Revolutionary Party. Took part in the Non-cooperation Movement (1921) and in revolutionary activities. Took up the assignment of killing Police Commissioner Tegart at Calcutta. Made a mistake in identifying Tegart and shot another Englishmen, Mr. E. Day, on January 12, 1924. Chased and arrested by the Police. Sentenced to death. Died on the gallows in the Alipur Jail on March 1, 1924.

SAI, SURENDRA: b. January 23, 1809, at v. Borgaon, Distt. Sambalpur, Orissa; s. of Shri Dharam Singh; Prince of the Chauhan royal family of Sambalpur State and claimant to the throne; Arrested in 1940 by the British, along with his brother Udanta Sai and his uncle Balram Singh, on the charge of murdering the Zamindar of Rampur. All the three were sentenced to imprisonment for life and lodged in the Hazaribagh Jail. Set free by rebel soldiers during the Revolt of 1857. Reached Sambalpur with his brothers in September 1857. The British Asstt. Commissioner rejected his claim to the throne and he retired to his village named Khinda. Secretly organized an armed force and challenged British authority in the State. Resworted to guerrilla warfare against the superior British forces. His brother, Chaabilo sai, and 58 other men of his force were killed in a battle with British troops in January 1858 at Dudupali. Remained in hiding till April 1861 when the new British Deputy Commissioner, Major Impey, declared an amnesty to the rebels if they surrendered voluntarily. Met Major Impey in May 1862 with 40 followers and was granted freedom and a pension. Arrested again in January 1864 by the next Deputy Commissioner along with his three brothers, Udanta, Dhruva and Medini, and three of his important followers. Charged with sedition and conspiring against British authority. All were sentenced to transportation for life, but were acquitted on appeal. Arrested again along with his brothers and the three followers and detained in the Asirgarh Fort Jail at Nagpur. Became blind and died in jail on February 28, 1884, Udanta Sai and Medini Sai also died in jail.

SARBA, KARTAR SINGH: b. 1896 at v. Saraba, Distt. Ludhiana; Punjab; s. of Shri Mangal Singh; Member of the Ghadar Party. Went to San Francisco, U.S.A. and worked at the Ghadar Party's press. Returned to India and visited Agra, Meerut, Banaras, Kanpur, Allahabad, etc., to urge Indian soldiers to rebel against the British. Arrested as a leader of the Lahore Military Conspiracy to overthrow British rule. Sentenced to death and confiscation of property. Died on the gallows on November 16, 1915.

SAYEED, BABU GENU: b. 1908 at v. Mahangule, Distt. Poona, Maharashtra; s of Shri Gyanaba alias Genu; Ed. Upto fourth Standard; Mill worker; Took active part in the Civil Disobedience Movement (1930). Participated in the Salt Satyagraha and picketed liquor shops and those selling foreign cloth. Lay down in front of a truck loaded with foreign cloth at a textile godown near Princess Street, Bombay on December 12, 1930. Crushed under the wheels of the truck. Died the same day in the G. T. Hospital, Bombay. The lane where this incident took place has been named after him. The people on his village established a high school in his memory and set up his statue.

SEN GUPTA, MANORANJAN: b. in Distt. Faridpur, Bengal (now in East Pakistan); Student; Joined the revolutionary party of Bengal and took part in activities against British rule. Arrested in December 1913 as an accused in the Faridpur Conspiracy Case. Released in April 1914 on the withdrawal of the case by the Government, Resumed his nationalist activities under the leadership of the famous revolutionary, Jatindra Nath Mukherjee. Participated in the successful revolutionary raids at Garden Reach, Beliaghata and Corporation Street in Calcutta. Escaped and remained underground. Took part in the abortive attempt to unload arms and ammunition which were brought secretly for Indian revolutionaries by the German ship Maverick on the Orissa coast. Ambushed by the police at Kapatipada, near Balasore, on September 9, 1915. In the encounter with the police, the leader, Jatindra Mukherjee, and Chittapriya Roy Chaudhary were killed. Captured by the police and tried along with his comrade, Nirendra Das Gupta, for the attempted murder of the District Magistrate and the policemen. Both of them were sentenced to death. Died on the gallows in the Balasore Jail on November 22, 1915.

SEN SURYA ALIAS MASTERDA: b. October 18, 1893, at v. Noapara, Distt. Chittagong, Bengal (now in East Pakistan); s. of Shri Rajmani Sen; Graduate in Arts; Teacher in Umatara High School, Chittagong; Joined the Revolutionary Party in 1918. Took part in the Non-cooperation Movement (1921). Became the leader of the Chittagong branch of the militant revolutionary organization known as the Indian Republican Army. Took part in organizing the political dacoity in the Pahartali railway office on December 23, 1923. Escaped arrest and remained underground. Set up revolutionary centres in the tea-garden areas of Assam-Silchar, Karimganj, Gauhati, Sibsasgar, etc. Arrested and tried, but was acquitted. Arrested again in 1924 and detained without trail for four years. Planned and executed the famous raid on the British armoury at Chittagong on April 18, 1930. Evaded arrest by the police and directed revolutionary activities from his secret hide-out. Detected in the house of Sabitri Chakrabarty at Patiya and surrounded by a military squad on June 13, 1932. Dodged the squad and slipped away after a brief encounter. Again surrounded by armed police and soldiers at Goiralal on February 16, 1933. Gave a tough fight but was finally captured. Subjected to bruatal beating and torture by the police. Sentenced to death. Died on the gallows in the Chittagong Jail on January 11, 1934.

SHRISH KUMAR: b. December 28, 1926, at Surat, Gujarat; Student; Took active part in the Quit India Movement (1942). Prepared and distributed anti-government bulletins and organised resistance against the repressive policies of the British authorities. Led a procession of students through the town of Nandurbar on August 10, 1942. The procesion was subjected to lathi charge at Mangal Bazar. The students led by him defied the police orders and proceeded to Manek Chowk. The police resoreted to firing in which he received bullet wound. Died clutching the tricolour and trying to shield girl students at whom the police and aimed their rifles.

TAJI MIDEREN: Resident of v. Elopain in the Ithun Valley, Distt. Lohit, North-East Frontier Agency; Farmer and trader; Took part in the activities against British rule and killed three British officers near the Dikran river in 1905. organized his Mishmi fellow-tribals for resisting the expansion of British authority. Established a Mishmi Confederacy under Pangon and other Mishmi leaders. A British expedition was sent to his village in 1913 for arresting burnt down the houses in the village, but failed to arrest them. Captured by the British police at Sadiya in December 1917, and deported to Tezpur in Assam. Tried and sentenced to death. Died on the gallows in the Tezpur Jail on January 29, 1918.

THANGAL (GENERAL): b. in 1806 at v. Thangal, Imphal, Manipur; a. of Shri Khetri Singh; General of the Manipur Army; fought bravely against the British to repel their invasion of independent Manipur State. Captured by the British, along with Maharajkumar Bir Tikendrajit Singh and Major-General Paonam Naol Singh, in 1891. Sentenced to death by the British for "waging was against the British Crown and abetment of the murder of European officers." Died on the gallows on August 13, 1891, at Keithel Achouba.

TIKENDRAJIT SINGH, MAHARAJKUMAR BIR: b. December 25, 1858, at Imphal, Manipur; s. of Maharaja Chandra Kirti Singh of Manipur; Good edication in Hindi and local languages, Yuvaraj and Commander-in-Chief of Manipur Army; Took a leading part

in resisting British intervention in the affairs of independent Manipur State. Countered British plots to overthrow the Maharaja. Fought bravely against the British invasion. Captured by the British in 1891, along with his General, Thangal and Paonam Naol Singh. Sentenced of death by the British for "waging war against the British Crown and abetment of the murder of European officers". Died on the gallows on August 13, 1919, at Keithel Achouba.

UDHAM SINGH: Resident of Amritsar, Punjab; Brought up in an orphanage in Amritsar after the death of his parents; Received early education at Amritsar; His tender mind was deeply shocked by the horrible scenes of cruelty and carnage at the Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar, on April 13, 1919, when hundreds of people were brutally killed and wonded by British troops in firing with machine-guns ordered by General Dyer. Took a vow to avenge the injustice and the brutal behaviours of the British towards his countrymen. Went to England and joined and Engineering course in London. Obtained a 6-chamber revolver and ammunition. Shot and killed Sir Michael O'Dyer (who was Governor of Punjab when the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy took place) at a meeting of the Royal Central Asian Society and the East India Association in the Caxton Hall, London, on March 13, 1940. Arrested and tried for murder. Sentenced to death. Died on the gallows in London on June 12, 1940.

NARAYANA RAJU: b. 1920 at v. Vempadu, Distt. West Godavari, Andhra Pradesh; s. of Shri Krishna Raju; Took part in the Quit India Movement (1942). Established centres for imparting physical training to patrioticy young men. Shot and killed in August 1942 by the police while leading a procession at Bhimavaram with the tricolour in his hands.

WADDEDAR, (KM.) PRITILATA: b. May 5, 1911, at v. Goalpara, Distt. Chittagong, Bengal (now in East Pakistan); daughter of Shri Jagat Bandhu Waddedar; College student at Calcutta; Member of the student organizations known as Dipali Sangh at Dacca and Chhatri Sangh at Calcutta. Took part in revolutionary activities and worked under the leadership of Surya Sen. Surrounded by the police in the house of Sabitri Chakrabarty at Patiya in Distt. Chittagong, along with Surya Sen and other revolutionaries. Escaped arrest and remained underground. Led

an unsuccessful attack on the Pahartali European Club at Chittagong on September 22, 1932. Committed suicide on the spot swallowing cyanide poison in order to avoid arrest.

NEHRU'S STATEMENT AT ALLAHABAD TRIAL

"I am making this statement not in order to defend myself against the various charges brought against me but to define my position and to state the motives which have induced me to act in the manner I have done. I have refused to plead guilty or not guilty and I have declined to participate in this trial by cross examination of witnesses or otherwise. I have done so because I do not recognize this Court as a court where justice is administered. I mean no disrespect to the presiding officer when I say that so far as political offences are concerned the counts in India merely register the decress of the executive. They are being used to-day even more than ever before to prop up the fabric of a government which has misgoverned India long enough and which has to resort to these tactics now in an attempt to restore a prestige which is gone for ever.

"I stand here charges with criminal intimidation and abetment of an attempt to extort. The warrant of my arrest bears also the familiar section 124 A, although I am not being tried for it to-day. I propose, however, to make a comprehensive statement. I cannot divide myself up into various compartments, one for picketing, another for sedition and yet another perhaps for volunteering. All my activities have but one end in view and that end I have striven to attain with all the strength and energy that is in me."

"Less than ten years ago, I returned from England after a lengthy stay there, I had passed through the usual course of public school and university. I had imbibed most of the prejudices of Harrow and Cambridge, and in my likes and dislikes I was perhaps more an Englishmen than an Indian. I looked upon the world almost from an Englishman's standpoint. And so I returned to India as much prejudiced in favour of England and the English as it was possible for an Indian to be."

"To-day, ten years later, I stand here in the dock charged with two offences and with a third hovering in the background – an ex-convict who has been to jail once already for a political offence,

and a rebel against the present system of government in India. That is the change which the years have wrought in me. It is not necessary for me to recite the reasons for this change. Every Indian knows them; every Indian has felt them and has hung his head in shame for them. And if he has retained a spark of the old fire in him, he has taken a solemn pledge to strive unceasingly for India's freedom, so that his countrymen may never again be subjected to the miseries and humiliations that are the lot of a subject people. To-day sedition against the present government in India has become the creed of the Indian people, preach and practice disaffection against the evil which it represents has become their chief occupation.

"I am charged with criminal intimidation and attempted extortion. I have wondered if these charges were seriously meant. The sections of the code which have been applied bear no relation to the facts even as disclosed by the prosecution evidence. I presume that the signal success that has attended our efforts in Allahabad has induced authorities to take some action against the picketers. If peaceful picketing for a lawful object is a crime then, indeed, I am guilty of having advised it and helped in it. But I have yet to learn that peaceful picketing has become an offence even under the laws of British India. Our object in picketing was to make the cloth dealers adhere to the pledge they had jointly taken. Does any one believe that we could achieve success in this by criminal intimidation and dextortion? All the world knows that our strength lies in the support of our people and the good will of our countrymen. Our weapons are not the old time ones of force and coercion. The weapons which our great leader has put in our hands are those of love and self-sacrifice. We suffer ourselves and by our suffering seek to convert our adversary.

"Criminal intimidation involves a threat of injury to a person or his property, and injury denotes harm "illegally" cause. So also extortion must include the putting of any person in fear of "injury" and thereby "dishonestly" inducing him to part with property. I have listened to the prosecution evidence with interest in order to find out on what ground these novel charges were based. What was the injury to any person or property that was threatened? What was the harm "illegally" caused? Where in lay the dishonesty

of any of us? I have not heard a single allegation yet made, much less proved which suggests that we have caused injury to any person or property, caused any harm illegally or acted dishonestly. Not a single prosecution witness, including the police and the C.I.D. has made such an allegation. In the whole of Allahabad there was found no person of the thousands who must have witnessed the picketing, who could bring the charge of any intimidation against us or even a harsh word uttered by one of our picketers. No greater proof of our triumph can bold to say, a model of its kind, perfectly peaceful, perfectly courteous relying on entreaties and exhortations and not even hinting at any force or intimidation. The cloth-dealers, who are alleged to have been intimidated by us are presumably the aggrieved party. But not one of them has complained.

"Ten months ago the cloth-dealers of Allahabad took a solemn pledge to refrain from purchasing foreign cloth till and end of 1922. All the signatories to the pledge, and they included almost of cloth-merchant in the city, constituted themselves into an association styled the Vyapari Mandal and elected office-bearers and a committee. The first business of the Mandal was to lay down that every member who broke his pledge and purchased foreign cloth would have to pay a certain penalty and in case he refused to do this, picketing would be resorted to. The committee of the Mandal was to determine in each individual case how much foreign cloth had been brought and what the penalty was to be. On several occasions during the past year the Mandal committee considered such breaches of the pledge and imposed ad received fines in accordance with their rules. Occasionally at their request picketing was also resorted to. Two months ago a large quantity of foreign cloth was purchased by some of the cloth dealers in Allahabad. This was in contravention of the pledge and the shops of some of these cloth-dealers were picketed. Later the committee of the Vyapari Mandal newly reconstituted assessed the fines on the merchants who had broken their pledges and themselves collected this money, which lies at the disposal of the Mandal. To the best of my knowledge to the gentlemen who have given evidence for the prosecution in this case are the members of the committee of the Mandal and as such they must have themselves helped in the assessment and collection of the fines.

"These are the facts relating to picketing in Allahabad. It is clear beyond doubt that there was neither any intimidation nor any attempt at extortion. The present prosecution is really an attempt to suppress lawful and peaceful picketing under cover of charges of intimidation and extortion. Picketing has been going on all over India for many months. It has taken place in many cities and bazaars in the province. Here in this very city of Allahabad we have repeatedly resorted to it. And yet Government took no action against it as such. They knew well that in India as in England peaceful picketing is no crime. Of course it is open to them by a stroke of the pen to make even peaceful picketing illegal. But whether they do so or not we shall nor gie it up. To entreat and exhort and advise others to follow a certain line of a action or to abstain from doing some thing is a right which we will not abandon, whatever the Government may do. We have few rights and privileges left in this country and even these are sought to be taken away. We have shown to the world how we value the right of free association, and we have continued our volunteers inspite of thousands of arrests and all Government notifications to the contrary. We will not and we cannot submit to any restriction of our right of free speech. A quarter of a century ago, a great English Judge stated in the House of Lords with reference to this right of speech. "A man has a right to say what he pleases, to induce, to exhort, to command, provided he does not slander or deceive or commit any other of the wrongs known to the law of which speech may be the medium. Unless he is thus shown to have abused his right, why is he to be called upon to excuse or justify himself because his words may interfere with some one else in his calling." This right of free speech we shall cling to, whatever the cost.

I am glad for many reasons that I am being tried for picketing. My trial will bring the question of the boycott of foreign cloth even more to the front and I am confident that when the people of Allahabad and the province realize the full significance of this boycott, they will discard all foreign cloth, treat it as unholy and the tough of it almost as a pollution. If they pondered over the evils and the misery and the poverty that foreign cloth has brought to this long-suffering country, perhaps they would feel some of the horror I feel at the thought of wearing it. They will not bring

forth know that the salvation of India and our hungry million demanded the use of the Charkha and the wearing of Khaddar, and they would cast out all foreign cloth and consign them to the flames or to the dust bin. I pray that the cloth-merchants of Allahabad will adhere to their sacred pledges twice taken, and do their utmost to bring about a complete boycott of foreign cloth in this ancient and holy city. Some of these cloth-dealers have give evidence for the prosecution in this case. I have no grievance against them. I shall suffer most gladly any imprisonment that may be awarded to me if I know that thereby I have toughed their hearts and won them over to the great cause. And I would appeal to the public of this city and province and earnestly request them to do this much for their country-wear Khaddar and ply the Charkha.

My co-accused and I are charged with intimidation and extortion. I should like the police and Government officials to examine their own conscience, to search deep down into their own conscience, to search deep down into their hearts and say what many of them have done during the past year and a half. Intimidation and terrorism, bribery and extortion, have been going on over the length and breadth of the province. And the persons guilty of them have not been Congressmen or our volunteers but the underlings of the Government who have indulged in them frequently with the knowledge and approval of their superiors. Yet they are not tried or punished. They are patted on the back and praised and promoted.

"My colleagues and I have been and personally investigated acts of terrorism and inhumanity. We have seen how men and women have been subjected to the uttermost humiliation. We have seen how terror reigns in Sitapur. We have investigated the brutalities of Shoratgnaj and we know how hundreds of Ballia's gallant workers have been sent to jail for the sole offence of being Congress office-bearers or other principal workers of the Congress. And the poor down-trodden *kisans* with the haunted hopeless look in their eyes, working away like the beasts of the field from morning to nighfall so that others may enjoy the fruits of their labour. I need not refer to individual districts. Almost every one of them has the same sad and splendid tale to tell.

"Intimidation and terrorism have become the chief instruments of the Government. By these methods they seek to keep down people and to suppress their disaffection. Do they imagine that they will thus instill affection for themselves in the people or make them loyal instruments of their imperialism? Affection and loyalty are of the heart. They cannot be purchased in the market-place; much less can they be extorted at the point of the bayonet. Loyalty is a fine thing. But in India some words have lost their meaning and loyalty has come to be almost a synonym for treason to the motherland and a loyalist is he who is not loyal to his God or his country but merely hangs on to the coat tails of his alien master. To-day, however, we have rescued the word from the depths and in almost every jail in India will be found true loyalists who have put their cause and their faith and their country above everything else and have been true to them despite all consequences. To them has come the great call: they have seen the vision of freedom and they will not rest or turn away till they have achieved their hearts' desire. England is a mighty country with her armies and her navies, but to-day she is confronted with something that is mightier. Her armies and her navies have to face suffering and the self-sacrifice of a nation determined to be free and no man can doubt what the issue of such a struggle must be. We are fighting for our freedom, for the freedom of our country and faith. We desire to injure no nation or people. We wish to have no dominion over others. But we must be perfectly free in our own country. England has cruelly wronged us during the past 150 years or more. And even yet she has not repented and mended her ways. India gave her a chance a year and a half ago, but in the pride and arrogance of her physical might she has not taken it. The people of India have tried her and they have passed judgment and from that d3ecreed there is no turning back. India will be free, of that there is no doubt but if England seeks the friendship of a free India she must repent and purge herself of her many sins. So that she may be worthy of a place in the coming order of things.

I shall go to jail again most willingly and joyfully. Jail has, indeed become a haven for us a holy place of pilgrimage, since our saintly and beloved leader was sentenced. Big-bodied, great-hearted Shaukat Ali, bravest of the brave and his gallant brother are there and so are thousands of our co-workers. One feels almost

lonely outside the jail, and selfishness prompts a quick return. Perhaps I shall be awarded a long term of imprisonment this time. Whether this is so or not, I shall go with the conviction that I shall come out to greet Swaraj in India.

I have said many hard things about the British Government. For one thing, however, I must offer it may grateful thanks. It has given us a chance of fighting in this most glorious of struggles. Surely few peoples have had such an opportunity given them. And the greater our suffering, the more difficult the tests we have to pass, the more splendid will be the future of India. India has not survived through thousands of years to go down now. India has not sent her noblest and best twenty-five thousands of her sons, to the jail to give up the struggle. India's future is assured. Some of us, men and women of little faith, doubt and hesitate occasionally, but those who have vision can almost see the glory that will be India's.

I marvel at my good fortune. To serve India in the battle of freedom is honour enough. To serve her under a leader like Mahatma Gandhi is doubly fortune. But to suffer for the dear country! What greater good fortune could befall an Indian, unless it is death or the full realization of our glorious dream?

GANDHIJI'S STATEMENT AT AHMEDABAD TRIAL

Before I read this statement, I would like to state that I entirely endorse the learned Advocate-General's remarks in connection with my humble self. I think that he was entirely fair to me in all the statements that he has made, because it is very true, and I have no desire whatsoever to conceal from this Court the fact, that to preach disaffection towards the existing system of Government has become almost a passion with me. And the learned Advocate-General is also entirely in the right when he says that my preaching of disaffection did not commence with my connection with *Young India* but that it commenced much earlier, and in the statement that I am about to read it will be my painful duty to admit before this Court that is commenced much earlier than the period stated by the Advocate-General. It is the most painful duty with me, but I have to discharge that duty knowing the responsibility that rested upon my shoulder.

And I wish to endorse all the blame that the Advocate-General has thrown on my shoulders in connection with the Bombay occurrences, the Madras occurrences and the Chauri Chaura occurrences. Thanking over these things deeply and sleeping over them night after night and examining my heart, I have come to the conclusion that it is impossible for me to dissociate myself from the diabolical crimes of Chauri Chaura or the mad outrages of Bombay. He is quite right when he says that as a man of responsibility, a man having received a fair share of education, having had a fair share of experience of this would, I should know the consequences of every one of my acts. I knew them. I knew that I was playing with fire. I ran the risk and if I was set free I would still do the same. I would be failing in my duty if I do not do so. I have felt it this morning that I would have failed in my duty if I did not say all what I said here just now. I wanted to avoid violence. Non-violence is the first article of my faith. It is the last article of my faith. But I had to make my choice. I had either to submit to a system which I considered has done an irreparable harm to my country or incur the risk of the mad fury of my people bursting forth when they understood the truth from my lips. I know that my people have sometimes gone mad. I am deeply sorry for it; and I am, therefore, here to submit not to a light penalty but to the highest penalty. I do not ask or mercy. I do not plead any extenuating act. I am here therefore; to invite and submit to the highest penalty that can be inflicted upon me for what in law is a deliberate crime and what appears to me to be the highest duty of a citizen. The only course open to you, Mr. Judge, is as I am just going to say in my statement, either to resign your post or inflict on me the severest penalty if you believe that the system and law you are assisting to administer are good for the people. I do not expect that kind of conversion. But by the time I have finished with my statement, you will perhaps have a glimpse of what is raging within my breast to run this maddest risk which a sane man can run.

Written Statement

I owe it perhaps to the Indian public and to the public in England to placate which this prosecution is mainly taken up that I should explain why from a staunch loyalist and co-operator I

have become an uncompromising disaffectionist and non-co-operator. To the Court too I should say why I plead guilty to the charge of promoting disaffection towards the Government established by law in India.

My public life began in 1893 in South Africa in troubled weather. My first contact with British authority in that country was not of a happy character. I discovered that as a man and as an Indian I had no rights. On the contrary I discovered that I had no rights as a man because I was an Indian.

But I was not baffled. I thought this treatment of Indians was an excrescence upon a system that was intrinsically and mainly good. I gave the Government my voluntary and heart co-operation; criticizing it fully where I felt it was faulty, but never wishing its destruction.

Consequently when the existence of the Empire was threatened in 1899 by the Boer challenge, I offered my services to it, raised a volunteer ambulance corps and served at several actions that took place for the relief of Ladysmith. Similarly in 1906, at the time of the Zulu revolt, I raised a stretcher-bearer party and served till the end of the rebellion. On both these occasions I received medals and was even mentioned in dispatches. For my work in South Africa I was given by Lord Hardinge a Kaiser-i-Hind Gold Medal. When the War broke out in 1914 between England and Germany I raised a volunteer ambulance corps in London consisting of the then resident Indians in London, chiefly students. It work was acknowledged by the authorities to be valuable. Lastly in India when a special appeal was made at the War Conference in Delhi in 1917 by Lord Chelmsford for recruits, I struggled at the cost of my health to raise a corps in Kheda and the response was being made when the hostilities ceased and orders were received that no more recruits were wanted. In all these efforts at service, I was actuated by the belief that it was possible by such services to gain a status of full equality in the Empire for my countrymen.

The first shock came in the shape of the Rowlatt Act. A law designed to rob people of all real freedom. I felt called upon to lead an intensive agitation against it. Then followed the Punjab horrors beginning with the massacre at Jallianwala Bagh and culminating in crawling orders, public floggings and other

indescribable humiliations. I discovered too that the plighted word of the Prime Minister to the Mussalmans of India regarding the inte3grity of Turkey and the holy places of Islam was not likely to be fulfilled. But inspite of the foreboding and the grave warnings of friends at the Amritsar Congress in 1919. I fought for co-operation and working the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, hoping that the Prime Minister would redeem his promise to the Indian Mussulmans, that the Punjab wound would be healed, and that the reforms, inadequate and unsatisfactory though they were, marked a new era of hope in the life of India.

But all that hope was shattered. The Khilafat promise was not to be redeemed. The Punjab crime was whitewashed, and most culprits went not only unpunished but remained in service and some continued to draw pensions from the Indian revenue and in some cases were even rewarded. I saw too that not only did the reforms not mark a change of heart, but they were only a method of further draining India of her wealth and of prolonging her servitude.

I came reluctantly to the conclusion that the British connection had made India more helpless than she ever was before, politically and economically. A disarmed India has no power of resistance against any aggressor if she wanted to engage in an armed conflict with him. So much is this the case that some of our best men consider that India must take generations before she can achieve the Dominion Status. She has become so poor that she has little power of resisting famines. Before the British advent, India spun and wove in her millions of cottages just the supplement she needed for adding to her meager agricultural resources. The cottage industry, so vital for India's existence, has been ruined by incredibly heartless and inhuman processes as described by English witness. Little do town-dwellers know how the semi-starved masses of Indians are slowly sinking to lifelessness? Little do they know that their miserable comfort represents the brokerage they get for the work they do for the foreign exploiter, that the profits and the brokerage are sucked from the masses. Little do they realize that the Government established by law in British India is carried on for this exploitation of the masses. No sophistry, no jugglery in figures can explain away the evidence the skeletons in many

villages present to the naked-eye. I have no doubt whatsoever that both England and the town-dwellers of India will have to answer, if there is a God above, for this crime against humanity which is perhaps unequalled in history. The law itself in this country has been used to serve the foreign exploiter. My unbiased examination of the Punjab Martial Law cases had led me to believe that at least ninety-five per cent of convictions were wholly bad. My experience of political cases in India leads me to the conclusion that in nine out of every ten the condemned men were totally innocent. Their crime consisted in love of their country. In ninety-nine cases out of hundred, justice has been denied to Indian as against Europeans in the courts of India. This is not an exaggerated picture. It is the experience of almost every Indian who had anything to do with such cases. In my opinions the administration of the law is thus prostituted consciously or unconsciously for the benefit of the exploiter.

The greatest misfortune is that Englishmen and their Indian associates in the administration of the country do not know that they are engaged in the crime I have attempted to describe. I am satisfied that many English and Indian officials honestly believe that they are administering one of the best systems devised in the world and that India is making steady through slow progress. They do no know that subtle but affective system of terrorism and an organized display of force on the one hand, and the deprivation of all powers of retaliation or self-defence on the other, have emasculated the people and induced in them the habit of simulation. This awful habit has added to the ignorance and the self-deception of the administrators. Section 124-A under which I am happily charged is perhaps the prince among the political sections of the Indian Penal Code designed to suppress the liberty of the citizen. Affection cannot be manufactured or regulated by law. If one has no affection for a person or thing, one should be free to give the fullest expression to his disaffection so long as he does not contemplate, promote or incite to violence. But the Section under which Mr. Banker and I are charged is one under which mere promotion of disaffection is a crime. I have studied some of the cases tried under it and I know that some of the most loved of India's patriots have been convicted under it. I consider it a privilege therefore to be charged under it. I have endeavored to

give in their briefest outline the reasons for my disaffection. I have no personal ill-will against any single administrator; much less can I have any disaffection towards the King's person. But I hold it to be disaffected towards a Government which, in its totality, has done more harm to India than any previous system. India is less manly under the British rule than she ever was before. Holding such a belief I consider it to be a sin to have affection for the system. And it has been a precious privilege for me to be able to write what I have in the various articles tendered in evidence against me.

In fact I believe that I have rendered a service to India and England by showing in non-co-operation the way out of the unnatural state in which both are living. In my humble opinion, non-co-operation with evil is an much a duty as is co-operation with good. But in the past, non-co-operation has been deliberately expressed in violence to the evil-doer. I am endeavouring to show to my countrymen that violent non-co-operation only multiplies evil and that as evil can only be sustained by violence, withdrawal of support of evil requires complete abstention from violence. Non-violence implies voluntary submission to the penalty for non-co-operation with evil. I am here; therefore, to invite and submit cheerfully to the highest penalty than can be inflicted upon me for what is law is deliberate crime and what appears to be the highest duty of a citizen.

The only course open to you, the Judge and the Assessors, is either to resign your posts and thus dissociate yourselves from evil, if you feel that the law you are called upon to administer is an evil and that in reality I am innocent, or to inflict on me the severest penalty if you believe that the system and the law you are assisting to administer are good for the people of this country and that my activity is, therefore injurious to the public weal.

9

Women and India's Independence Movement

"We record our homage and deep admiration for the Womanhood of India who in the hour of peril for the motherland forsook the shelter of their homes and with unfailing courage and endurance stood shoulder to shoulder with their menfolk, in the frontline of India's national army to share with them the sacrifices and triumphs of the struggle".

From a Resolution passed on January 26, 1931.

Role of Indian Women

The entire history of the freedom movement is replete with the saga of bravery, sacrifice and political sagacity of great men and women of the country. This struggle which gained momentum in the early 20th century, threw up stalwarts like Mahatma Gandhi, Lala Lajpat Rai, Motilal Nehru, Abul Kalam Azad, C. Rajagopalachari, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Jawaharlal Nehru and Subash Chander Bose. Their number and stature often gives us an erroneous impression that it was only a man's movement. But it is not so. Many prominent women played a leading role in the freedom movement.

The important place assigned to women in India dates back to the time of the *Vedas* and *Smritis.* Manu declared that where women were adored, Gods frequented that place, During the Vedic age the position of women in society was very high and they were regarded as equal partners with men in all respects. Who had not heard of Maitri, Gargi, Sati Annusuya and Sita?

In keeping with this tradition, burden of tears and toils of the long years of struggle for India's freedom was borne by the wives, mothers, and daughters, silently and cheerfully. The programme of self-imposed poverty and periodical jail going was possible only because of the willing co-operation of the worker's family. In the various resistance movements in the villages, the illiterate women played this passive but contributory part as comrades of their menfolk.

Rani Laxmibai

The first name that comes to mind is that of the famous Rani Laxmibai of Jhansi. Dressed in men's clothes, she led her soldiers to war against the British. Even her enemies admired her courage and daring. She fought valiantly and although beaten she refused to surrender and fell as a warrior should, fighting the enemy to the last. Her remarkable courage inspired many men and women in India to rise against the alien rule.

Begum Hazrat Mahal

Another woman whom we remember in this connection was Begum Hazrat Mahal, the Begaum of Oudh. She took active part in the defence of Lucknow against the British. Although, she was queen and used to a life of luxury, she appeared on the battle-field herself to encourage her troops. Begam Hazrat Mahal held out against the British with all her strength as long as she could. Ultimately she had to give up and take refuge in Nepal.

During the later half of the 20th century the struggle for freedom gained momentum and more women took leading part in it.

Kasturba Gandhi

The life companion of the Father of the Nation contributed her mite to the freedom movement in a subtle manner. As the closest associate of Gandhiji during his epic struggle in South Africa and in India, she suffered in no small measure.

One simply marvels and wonders how this quiet self-effacing woman underwent countless trails as Gandhiji's wife, and how gallantly she agreed to the Mahatma's endless experiments and self-imposed life of poverty and suffering.

Swarup Rani and Kamala

The mother of Jawaharlal Nehru, Swarup Rani Nehru cheerfully gave her husband and children to the country's cause and herself, old and trail entered the pray at its thickest.

Jawaharlal's brave wife, Kamala; kept smiling all through the long years of travail of her brief life.

Kamala Nehru was a flame that flickered briefly in the raging storm of the freedom movement in India. Not everybody knows that she braved lathi-charges, picketed liquor shops and languished in jail for the cause of Indian independence. She influenced her husband Jawaharlal and stood by him in his determination to plunge into the movement started by Mahatma Gandhi, to free the mother Mahatma Gandhi, to free the motherland from the clutches of the British rulers.

With Jawaharlal away in prison, Kamala took to social work to begin with. She started a dispensary in her house in Allahabad and also started a movement for women's education and to get them out of *purdah.*

As a member of the Rashtriya Stree Sabha which was set up on a Jallianwala Day in 1921, Kamala Nehru worked for the entry of Harijan into temples.

Kamala Nehru was first among the group of volunteers to sell contraband salt during the Salt Satyagraha. All through the long months of 1930, the Desh Sevika Sangh which she led along with Kusturba Gandhi and Sarojini Naidu, did hard jobs like policing disturbed areas in Bombay. While the men were in jail, they took over.

Sarojini Naidu

Great as a poet and orator, Sarojini Naidu was one of the most enlightened women of modern India.

She was one among the many men and women who dedicated their lives for the freedom struggle of the counry under the guidance of Gandhiji. At a very young age she wrote many patriotic poems which inspired people in India to throw off the foreign yoke. She joined the Home Rule movement launched by Annie Besant. This was her first step in politics. On the call of Gopal

Krishna Gokhale, she joined the Indian National Congress in 1915. She propounded the idea of Swarajya in her powerful speech at the Lucknow Conference in 1916. in 1921 she participated in the Non-Cooperation movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi. She became President of the Congress in 1925. When Mahatma Gandhi started his Civil disobedience movement in 1930, Sarojini Naidu became his principal assistant. She was arrested along with Gandhiji and other leaders. But this did not deter her spirits. In 1931, she was invited along with Gandhiji to the Second Round Table Conference in London. In 1942, Sarojini Naidu joined the "Quit India" movement launched by Gandhiji and again was victim of the wrath of the British government and jailed. The repeated jail terms only gave her more courage and she continued to take active part in the freedom movement. After India became independent in 1947, she was appointed Governor of Uttar Pradesh as a token of recognition of her services.

Padmaja Naidu

Sarojini's daughter Miss Padmaja Naidu devoted herself to the cause of Nation like her mother. At the age of 21, she entered the National scene and became the joint founder of the Indian National Congress of Hyderabad. She spread the message of Khadi and inspired people to boycott foreign goods. She was jailed for taking part in the "Quit India" movement in 1942. After Independence, she became the Governor of West Bengal. During her public life spanning over half a century, she was associated with the Red Cross. Her services to the Nation and especially her humanitarian approach to solve problems will long be remembered.

Vijay Laxmi Pandit

Sister of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru also played a great role in the freedom movement. She was elected to Uttar Pradesh Assembly in 1936 and in 1946. She was the first woman in India to hold a ministerial rank. She was imprisoned thrice for taking part in the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1932. 1941 and 1942. After Independence, she continued to serve the country. She was the first woman to become president of the United Nations General Assembly.

Sucheta Kripalani

The contribution of Sucheta Kripalani in the struggle for freedom is also worthy of note. She courted imprisonment for taking part in freedom struggle. She was elected as a member of Constituent Assembly in 1946. She was general secretary of Indian National Congress from 1958 to 1960, and Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh from 1963 to 1967. Sucheta Kripalani was in the words of Shrimati Indira Gandhi, "a person of rare courage and character who brought credit to Indian womanhood."

Indira Gandhi

The most remarkable of women in modern India's was Indira Gandhi who from her early years was active in the national liberation struggle. During the 1930 movement, she formed the 'Vanar Sena'. A children's brigade to help freedom fighters.

She became a member of the Indian National Congress in 1938. Soon after her return to India in March 1941, she plunged into political activity.

Her public activity entered a new phase with India's Independence in 1947. She took over the responsibility of running the Prime Minister's House. The Congress, which had been her political home ever since her childhood, soon drew her into leading political roles, first as member of the Congress Working Committee in 1955 and later as member of the Central Parliamentary Board in 1958. In 1959, she was elected President of the Indian National Congress. She oriented Congress thinking and action towards basic issues confronting Indian society and enthused the younger generation the task of nation-building.

In the eventful years of her leadership as Prime Minister, Indian society underwent profound changes. She was unremitting in her endeavour for the unity and solidarity of the nation. A staunch defender of the secular ideals of the Constitution, she worked tirelessly for the social and economic advancement of the minorities. She had a vision of a modern self-reliant and dynamic economy. She fought boldly and vigorously against communalism, obscurantism, re-vivalism and religious fundamentalism of all types. She repeatedly warned the nation that communalism and obscuranatism were the tools employed by the forces of

destabilization. She laid down her life in defence of the ideals on which the unity and integrity of the Republic are founded. The martyrdom of Mahatma Gandhi and Indira Gandhi for upholding the unity of India will reverberate across the centuries.

Rarely in history has one single individual come to be identifie do totally with the fortunes of a country. She became the indomitable symbol of India's self-respect and self-confidence. Death came to her when she was at her peak, when her stature and influence were acclaimed the world over.

FOREIGN WOMEN IN THE INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT OF INDIA

Besides the hundreds and thousands of Indian women who dedicated their lives for the cause of their motherland, there were a number of noble and courageous foreign women who saw in India – its religion, its philosophy and its culture, a hope for the redemption of the world. They thought that in India's spiritual death shall world find its grave.

These noble women were sick of the material west and found in India and in its civilization, solace for their cramped souls.

First of all we will take up those who were influenced by the great men of India like Swami Vivekananda, Aurobindo Ghosh, Mahatma Gandhi, and came to this country to serve it.

Sister Nivedita

'Here reposes Sister Nivedita who gave her all to India'

Epitaph on her Samadhi.

Sister Nivedita was one among the host of foreign women who were attracted towards Swami Vivekananda and Hindu philosophy. Born in Ireland on 28 October 1867, she arrived in India in January, 1898, in search of truth. She was impressed by the ideals of Womanhood in India. She once remarked that India was the land of great women. She, however, felt that Indian women needed, to cultivate among themselves a wider and broader concept of the nation, so that they could participate along with men in building a free and strong nation. On the death of her spiritual Master, Swami Vivekananda, she freed herself from the

obligations of the Monastic Order, spoke and wrote against the British policy in India. She attacked Lord Curzon for the Universities Act of 1904 and partition of Bengal in 1905. She held the British responsible for disastrous state of Indian economy; she attended the Benares Congress in 1905 and supported the Swadeshi Movement. She helped Nationalist groups like the *Dawn Society* and the *Anusilan Samiti.* She was a member of the Central Council of Action formed by Aurobindo Ghosh and took up the editorship of the *Karmayogin* when he left for Pondicherry.

She propagated for the cause of India throughout America and Europe. Swami Vivekananda described her as a real Lioness. Rabindranath Tagore regarded her as *Lok-Mata* and Aurobindo Ghosh as *Agni-sikha.*

The Mother

Mira Alphonse, the Mother, was born in Paris in 1978. She had shown depth of vision and fragrance of expression even in her early childhood. She came to India in 1914 and met Shri Aurobindo. She was associated with the work of Shri Aurobindo when he started a philosophical monthly named *Arya* on August 15, 1914, to express his vision of man and his divine destiny.

She took charge of Ashram in Pondicherry in 1926. She was the inspirer of Auroville, the international town near Pondicherry. It was to serve as a meeting place for the followers of Shri Aurobindo.

Paying her tribute to the Mother at a women's gathering in Kanpur the late Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi said: "The Mother was a dynamic lady, who came from France and adopted the Indian culture. She played an important role in motivating women like Mrs. Annie Besant and Mrs. Nellie Sen Gupta, The Mother had also contributed to enrich India's age-old heritage and culture".

Mira Behn

Mira Behn, or Mira as she was most often called was the western world's acknowledgement of guilt and the will to atone for it. This was not at all in her won consciousness, but in that which put her forth. Gandhi did not evoke her. The most he did

was to tell her she could come if she wished. She came as a daughter not only of the western mind but, specifically, of that class which had made and governed the British empire in India. Her father had been the naval commander-in-chief there.

This is how Madeleine Slade brought up in affluent environment of a proud aristocracy came to serve the cause of India's freedom by identifying herself completely with the life and work of Gandhi, who promised to Romain Rolland that he would leave no stone unturned, to assist her to become a bridge between the East and the West.

Daughter of a British Admiral Madeleine Slade renounced the life of luxury and worked in the service of India. She accompanied Gandhi to England in 1931 and undertook a tour of America and Britain in 1934 to enlist sympathy for the Indian cause. She suffered imprisonment in 1932-33 and 1942-44 for the cause of India's Independence.

Dr. Annie Besant

Dr. Annie Besant, along with Charles Braudlaugh, it is said, did more than anyone had done in a hundred years to break down the barriers of bigotry and prejudice, who won the greatest victories of their times for the freedom of speech and liberty of the press which Britain enjoys today.

A strong votary of truth, she came to India in 1893 at the age of 46, impressed as she was by its great religion and philosophy. On arrival, she found that the state of things in India were bad, and that the Indians had almost lost their moorings. Through her lectures, she tried to awaken them to their lost heritage by dedicating herself to the cause of religion, society and education of India. In doing so, she was watchful that Indian revival must be through Indian traditions and customs and not through any of the European concepts. As early as 1898 and later in 1902 she urged Indians to were native dress, use and develop Indian manufacturers and also develop a national language.

Dr. Annie Besant entered active politics in 1914. She demanded Home Rule for India and suffered internment for it from June to September 1917. By then she had tried and achieved unification of the Congress and Hindus and Muslims in 1916. She had done

ample work to formulate favourable opinion about the Indian question in outside world. The August declaration of 1917 is attributed to her efforts.

She fittingly became the president of Indian National Congress in 1917. Tilak declared that if we were nearer our goals, it was due to Dr. Annie Besant's sincere efforts. Gokhale considered her a true daughter of Mother India. Subash considered her a doughty fighter for Indian freedom. Jawaharlal Nehru said that in India, her memory would endure, especially for the part she played in our freedom struggle in the dark days of the Great War and afterwards. Sarojini Naidu, had this to say.

"Had it not been for her and her enthusiasm, one could not have seen Mr. Gandhi leading the cause of Indian freedom today. It was Mrs. Besant who laid the foundation of modern India – Dr. Besant was a combination of Parvati, Lakshmi and Saraswati."

10

Role of Press

At the time of the first war of independence, any number of papers were in operation in the country. Many of these like *Bangadoot* of Ram Mohan Roy, Rastiguftar of Dadabhai Naoroji and *Gyaneneshun* advocated social reforms and thus helped arouse national awakening.

At was in 1857 itself that *Payam-e-Azadi* started publication in Hindi and Urdu, calling upon the people to fight against the British. The paper was soon confiscated and anyone found with a copy of the paper was persecuted for sedition. Again, the first Hindi daily, *Samachar Sudhavarashan,* and two newspapers in Urdu and Persian respectively, *Doorbeen* and *Sultan-ul-Akhar*, faced trial in 1957 for having published a 'Firman' by Bahadur Shah Zafar, urging the people to drive the British out if India. This was followed by the notorious *Gagging* Act of Lord Canning, under which restrictions were imposed on the newspapers and periodicals.

NOTABLE ROLE

In the struggle against the British, some newspapers played a very notable role. This included the *Hindi Patriot!* Established in 1853, by the author and playwright, Grish Chandra Ghosh, it became popular under the editorship of Harish Chandra Mukherjee. In 1861, the paper published a play, "Neel Darpan" and launched a movement against the British, urging the people to stop cultivating the crop for the white traders. This resulted in the formation of a Neel Commission. Later, the paper was taken over by Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar. The paper strongly opposed the Government's excesses and demanded that Indians be

appointed to top government posts. The *Indian Mirror* was the other contemporary of this paper which was very popular among the reading public.

Yet another weekly, *Amrita Bazar Patrika* which was being published from Jessore, was critical of the government, with the result that its proprietors faced trial and conviction. In 1871, the *Patrika* moved to Calcutta and another Act was passed to suppress it and other native journals.

Marathi Press

Mahadev Govind Rande, a leading leader of Maharashtra, used to write in *Gyan Prakash* as well as the *Indu Prakash.* Both these journals helped awaken the con-science of the downtrodden masses. Another Marathi weekly, Kesari was started by Tilak from January 1, 1881. He alongwith Agarkar and Chiplunkar started another weekly journal, *Mratha* in English. The Editor of the '*Daccan Star'* Nam Joshi also joined them and his paper was incorporated with *Maratha.* Tilak and Agarkar were convicted for writings against the British and the Diwan of *Kolhapur.* Tilak's Kesari became one of the leading media to propagate the message of freedom movement. It also made the anti-partition movement of Bengal a national issue. In 1908, Tilak opposed the Sedition ordinance. He was later exiled from the country for six years. Hindi edition of *Kesari* was started from Nagpur and Banaras.

PRESS AND THE FIRST SESSION OF CONGRESS

The Editors commanded a very high reputation at the time of the birth of the Indian National Congress. One could measure the extent of this respect from the fact that those who occupied the frontline seats in the first ever Congress session held in Bombay in December 1885 included some of the editors of Indian newspapers. The first ever resolution at this Session was proposed by the editor of The Hindu, G. Subramanya Iyer. In this resolution, it was demanded that the government should appoint a committee to enquire into the functioning of Indian administration. The second resolution was also moved by a journalist from Poona, Chiplunkar in which the Congress was urged to demand for the abolition of India Council which ruled the country from Britain.

The third resolution was supported by Dadabhai Naoroji who was a noted journalist of his time. The fourth resolution was proposed by Dadabhai Naoroji.

There were many Congress Presidents who had either been the editors or had started the publication of one or the other newspapers. In this context, particular mention may be made of Ferozeshah Mehta who had started the *Bombay Chronicle* and Pandit Madan Malaviya who edited daily, *Hindustan*. He also helped the publication of *leader* from Allahabad. Moti Lal Nehru was the first Chairman of the Board of Directors of the leader. Lala Lajpat Rai inspired the publication of three journals, the *Punjabi, Bandematram* and the *People* from Lahore. During his stay in South Africa, Gandhiji has brought out *Indian Opinion* and after settling in India, he started the publication of *Young India; Navjeevan, Harijan, Harijan Sevak and Harijan Bandhu.* Subash Chandra Bose and C. R. Das were not journalists but they acquired the papers like *Forward* and *Advance* which later attained national status. Jawaharlal Nehru founded the *National Herald.*

Revolutionary Movement and the Press

So far as the revolutionary movement is concerned, it did not begin with guns and bombs but it started with the publication of newspapers. The first to be mentioned in this context is *Yugantar* publication of which was started by Barindra Kumar Ghosh who edited it also.

When the Ghadar party was organized in America, Lala Hardayal started publication of the journal 'Ghadar'. Within one year, millions of copies of this journal were published in Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Gujarati, Marathi and English and sent to India and to all parts of the world where Indians were residing. In the beginning the copies of the journal were concealed in parcels of foreign cloth sent to Delhi. It was also planned to smuggle the printing press into India for this purpose. But then the war broke out and it became almost impossible to import printing machinery from abroad. Lala Hardayal was attested in America and deported to India. One of his followers Pandit Ramchandra started publishing *Hindustan Ghadar* in English. With the U.S. joining the war, the Ghadar party workers were arrested by the American

Government. When the trail was on, one of the rivals of Pandit Ramchandra managed to obtain a gun and shoot him dead in the jail itself. The death of Ramchandra led to the closure of this paper.

In 1905 Shyamji Krishna Verma started publication of a journal *Indian Sociologist* from London. It used to publish reports of political activities taking place at the India House in London. In 1909 two printers of this journal were convicted. Shyamji Krishna Verma left England for Paris from where he started the publication of the journal. Later on, he had to leave for Geneva. He continued to bring out the journal from there for two or three years more. In Paris, Lala Hardayal, in collaboration with Madam Cama and Sardar Singhraoji Rana brought our *Vandematram* and Talwar.

After *Yugantar,* it was *Vandematram* that played a significant role in the freedom struggle. This journal was established by Subodha Chandra Malik, C. R. Das and Bipin Chandra Pal on August 6, 1906. its editor, Aurobindo Ghosh, the editor of *Sandhya* B. Upadhyay and editor of *Yugantar* B.N.Dutt had to a face a trial for espousing the cause of freedom.

So far as the Hindi papers were concerned, they looked to government for support for some time. Bhartendu Harish Chandra was the first to start a journal *Kavi Vachan Sudha* in 1868. its policy was to give vent to the miseries of the people of India. When the Prince of Wales visited India, a poem was published in his honour. The British authorities were given to understand that the poem could also mean that the Prince of Wales should get a shoe-beating.

The government aid to journals like *Kavi Vachan Sudha* was stopped for publishing what was objectionable from the government point of view. Bhartendu Harish Chandra resigned from his post of an honorary Magistrate. His two friends, Pratap Narain Mishra and Bal Krishna started publication of two important political journals.

Two friends, Pratap Narain Mishra and Bal Krishna Bhatt started publication of two important political journals *Pradeep* from Allahabad, and *Brahman* from Kanpur. The *Pradeep* was ordered to be closed down in 1910 for espousing the cause of

freedom. The *Bharat-Mitra* was a famous Hindi journal of Calcutta which started its publication on May 17, 1878 as a fortnightly. It contributed a lot in propagating the cause of freedom movement. The journal exposed the British conspiracy to usurp Kashmir. Several other papers published from Calcutta which played an important role in freedom struggle included Ambika Prasad Vajpayee's *Swantrantra*, Ramanand Chatterjee's *Modern Review* in English, *Pravasi Patra' in Bengali and Vishal Bharat* in Hindi.

One of the foremost Hindi journalist who has earned a name for his patriotism was Ganesh Shanker Vidyarthi. In 1913, he brought out weekly *Pratap* from Kanpur. He made the supreme sacrifice in 1931 in the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity. Krishna Dutt Paliwal brought out *Sainik* from Agra which became a staunch propagator of nationalism in Western U.P. The noted Congress leader, Swami Sharadhanand, started the publication of Hindi journal *Vir Arjun* and Urdu journal *Tej*. After the assassination of Swami Sharadhanand, Vidyavachaspathi and Lala Deshbandhu Gupta continued the publication of these journals. They were themselves prominent Congress leaders.

In Lahore, Mahashaya Khushal Chand brought out *Milap* and Mahashaya Krishna started publishing Urdu journals which helped a lot in promoting the national cause. In 1881, Sardar Dayal Singh Majitha on the advice of Surendra Nath Bannerjee brought out *Tribune* under the editorship of Sheetala Kant Chatterjee. Bipin Chandra Pal also edited this paper for sometime. Later in 1917, Kalinath Rai joined the paper as its editor.

There is not a single province in India which did not produce a journal of newspaper to uphold the cause of freedom struggle A. G. Horniman made the *Bombay chronicle'* a powerful instrument to promote militant nationalism. He himself took part in the meetings where Satyagraha used to be planned. He published vivid accounts of Jallianwala Bagh carnage for which one correspondent of his paper, Goverdhan Das, was sentenced to three years' imprisonment by a military court. Horniman too was arrested and deported to London even though he was ill at that time. Amritlal Shet brought out the Gujarati Journal '*Janmabhumi* which was an organ of the people of the princely states of Kathiawad, but it became a mouthpiece of national struggle.

Similarly another Gujarati journal *Saanjvartman* played a prominent role under the editorship of Sanwal Das Gandhi, who played a very significant role in the Quit India Movement in 1942. It was soon after independent formed a parallel Government in Junagarh and forced the Nawab of Junagarh to leave the country. The three editors of the Sindhi journal *Hindi* Jairam Das Daulatram, Dr. Choithram Gidwani and Hiranand Karamchand, were arrested, their press closed and the property of the paper confiscated.

In Bihar the tradition of national newspapers was carried forward by Sachidanand Sinha, who had started the publication of *Searchlight* under the editorship of Murtimanohar Sinha. Dev Brat Shastri started publication of *'Nav Shakti* and R*ashtra Vani'*. The weekly *yogi* and the *Hunkar'* also contributed very much to the general awakening.

11

Congress and Colonial Struggles

Leaders of many struggling countries in Asia, locked in the battle for freedom, were conscious of the fact that their struggle was a part of the general struggle in all colonial countries. They extended support to each other. Sun yatsen once offered to make over the funds he had collected for revolutionary struggle in China to the Philippine revolutionaries and was willing to postpone the uprisings he had planned in China so that the cause of independence of the Philippines could be furthered. Perhaps more than any other country, the Indian National Congress leadership was clear from a very early stage in demonstrating solidarity with the other struggling, colonial peoples. This feeling of oneness and of a common struggle was instinctively felt by Dadabhai Naoroji, Banerjee, Gokhale, Tilak, Lajpat Rai and other leaders of the time. Under the leadership of Gandhiji and Jawaharlal Nehru, this became a matter of faith as well as of policy.

VOCAL SUPPORT

With each passing day the Congress became more and more firm and vocal in its support to the struggle for independence of other suppressed countries and sharper in its condemnation of imperialism in other colonial countries. One would recall the rare, enlightened stand on the part of nationalist struggle, when far from feeling elated over the British annexing Burma and making it a part of India, the Congress berated the British action as imperialist expansion and supported the struggle of the Burmese people for independence. In 1921 the Congress passed a resolution conveying felicitations to the people of Burma on their struggle

for independence and declared that a free India would favour Burma's independence from India. Gandhiji made India's position very clear when he said that Burma "never was" and "never should be" a part of India and that the annexation of Burma was indefensible.

Much before that nationalist leadership had condemned the British policy of expansion at India's frontiers and saddling India with a large standing army and huge military expenditure. As early as 1878-80, the national leaders opposed the Afghan was waged by the British and Surrendranath Bannerjee described it as "one of the most unrighteous wars that have blackened the pages of history". In 1897 the Congress President, G. Sankaran Nair, advocated a peaceful policy for India in order to ensure an environment of peace around India's frontiers to enable her to undertake internal development.

Similarly the Nationalist leaders opposed military ventures and imperialist conquests and the use of Indian army men and resources for waging such imperialist wars in other parts of Asis and Africa. They know that it was the same phenomenon of imperialism. In 1882 the British with the participation of the so-called "Government of India" dispatched a military expedition to Egypt to suppress and smother the nationalist struggle there. Rightly did the nationalist opinion condemn it as immoral and aggressive, a war meant to serve British imperialist interests. Subsequently the Congress extended support to the Irish nationalists as well as the nationalist struggle in Egypt.

Yet another instance was the struggle in China. China has fallen a prey to a consortium of powers, at one time dominated by Britain and after the first would war came the iron fist of Japanese imperialism. At the same time the country was bedeviled by warlordism in league with various imperialist powers and consequently by constant warfare. China had become the "sickman of Asia", a play thing of foreign powers, foreign business interest and foreign missionaries, mostly in collusion with one another, and of the internal forces of reaction, feudalism and military satraps. The people were groaning under this duel suppression. A reorganized Nationalist Party led by Sun Yatsen began the struggle against foreign imperialism and native warlordism and

launched the Nathern Expedition from Canton in 1925 for the unification of China and the restoration of Chinese sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Congress lent full support to the nationalist struggle in China and sharply condemned the use of Indian troops in China. Gandhiji condemned this use of Indian soldiers in shooting and killing Chinese students as a demonstration of the fact that India is being kept under subjugation, not merely for the exploitation of India herself, but that it enables Great Britain to exploit the great and ancient Chinese people".

PROCESS OF AWAKENING

Jawaharlal Nehru further spurred this process of awakening and the sentiment of solidarity with the colonial peoples. Indeed Jawaharlal became the conscience of the struggle of the colonial people. It is well-known that on behalf of the Indian National Congress, Jawaharlal attended the international Congress against Colonial Oppression and Imperialism in Brussels in February 1927 and subsequently the Congress was affiliated to the League against Imperialism and for National Independence as an associate member. Jawaharlal was elected one of the Presidents of the Brussels Conference along with such world luminaries as Albert Einstein, Madam Sun Yatsen, Romain Rolland and others and was later made a member of the Executive Council of the League. In his speeches at this time Jawaharlal dwelt on the nature of imperialism as an advanced stage of capitalism and his dominant theme was the common struggle of colonial countries and the need to stand by one another.

Who can fail to remember the movement launched by Gandhiji in 1920 in support of the Muslims of Turkey that came to be known as the Khilafat Movement? This was also the time when the Congress was transformed from "an annual reunion of politicians to ventilate Indian grievances" into a deliberative but also a mass body determining national policies and controlling and directing their execution. The All India Congress Committee was reorganized on a population basis; provincial committees were formed on a linguistic basis; and the Congress Working Committee was created. In 1918 the allies were swept to victory. Germany has been defeated. Turkey and surrendered and the

Ottoman Empire had collapsed. The Arabs were incited by the British to revolt against the Caliph and the Greeks to claim a coastal strip that included Smyrna. The British had gone back on their won pledges, given by Asquith and Lloyd George about the integrity of the Turkish dominion and independence of Muslim territories. It was on the strength of these pledges that the Muslim Indian troops had participated in the war against the Turkish Muslim army. But now the British threatened the total disintegration of Turkey and the loss of Muslim holy places.

The Muslims in India were agitated. The Muslim League leader Dr. Ansari demanded the maintenance of the integrity and independence of the Muslim states and the restoration of Jazirat-ul-Arab (the Arab region) containing the holy places of Islam to the Caliph. Hakim Ajmal Khan, Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Congress in 1918 expressed similar sentiments.

SUPPORT TO KHILAFAT MOVEMENT

Gandhiji extended full support to the Khilafat Movement and decided to lead a non-cooperation movement against the British Government. He said in an article in 'Yong India', "I am bound as an Indian to share the sufferings and trials of fellow Indians. If I deem the Mohammedan to be my brother, it is my duty to help him in his hour of trial to the best of my ability, if his cause commends itself to me as just. "Gandhiji came down severely on Montagne and on the British rule in its indifference to the feelings of the Muslims all over the world, and particularly in India. "To my amazement and dismay I have discovered that the present representatives of the Empire have become dishonest and unscrupulous, "he wrote,"They have no regard for the wishes of the people of India and they count the honour of India as of little importance. I can no longer retain affection for a government so evilly manned as it is today".

SOLIDARITY WITH THE OPPRESSED

There was not a struggle for freedom and liberation that did not get the support of the Congress. Jawaharlal stood in the forefront in the denunciation of imperialism and fascism. From Spain to Ethiopia Jawaharlal carried the message of the Congress

of complete solidarity with the oppressed countries. As he put it in 1939: "The frontiers of our struggle lie not only in our own country but in Spain and China also". Indeed Jawaharlal wanted to personally and physically serve in the Spanish struggle against fascism and it was only the demands of the independence struggle in India that held him back.

The invasion of Ethiopia (then called Abbeysinia) by fascist Italy under Mussolini in 1936 ranged the Congress fully behind the Ethiopian people. The congress observed an "Ethiopia Day" and carried on the work of mobilization against imperialism and fascism. Jawaharlal had gone to Europe and when on his return journey, the plane touched Rome for a stop-over, an insistent request came down from Mussolini to meet him, but Jawaharlal wanted to have nothing to do with a dictator who was enslaving the people of Ethiopia.

Similarly, in regard to the Japanese invasion of China, the Congress expressed deep anguish at this brutal invasion and expressed solidarity with the Chinese people with concrete steps. The Congress organized a boycott of Japanese goods throughout the country and held meetings and demonstrations against Japanese imperialism and in support of the struggle of the Chinese people. Later, the Congress sent a medical mission to China as a token of its support in the war against Japanese imperialism. This the Congress stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the people of other colonial countries and in full solidarity with their struggle.

BRITISH FRIENDS OF INDIA

The mutual impact of Britain and India is a subject of absorbing interest. Some studies have been made of its varied aspects – art, literature, philosophy, religion, science and education. No attempt has, however, been made to evaluate the contribution made by the liberal English statesman – A.O. Hume, W.S.Blunt, Henry Cotton, Henry Yule, Charles Bradlaugh, Wedderburn, H. M. Hyndman, John Bright, H. J. Laski, C. F. Andrews and many others – to India's struggle for freedom. Indian scholars have written excellent biographies of Indian leaders – Gokhale, Tilak, Gandhi, Jawaharlal, Dadabhai Naoroji, Badruddin Tyabji and others. No Indian scholar has, however, yet attempted the task

of writing the biographies of A. O. Hume, Charles Bradlaugh and others.

The history of India's struggle for freedom cannot be studied in its true perspective if this important aspect of the nationalist struggle is neglected. It is, therefore, only fair that the services rendered to India by these liberal Englishmen should be properly evaluate. It may, however, be mentioned that none of these English statesmen ever visualized a completely independent India having full sovereign rights. Even the most ardent advocates of the freedom of this country – Henry Cotton, W. S. Blunt, Mrs. Annie Besant and Charles Bradlaugh – thought only of self-Government or Home Rule for India. It will be too much to expect that they should have agitated for complete independence to India especially when our own leaders such as Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866-1915), Surendranath Banerjee (1848-1925), W. C. Bonnerjee (1844-1906) and Pherozeshah Mehta (1845-1915) desired for their country only the status of a self-governing country.

John Britain

Throughout the 19th century, a number of noble Englishmen, inspired by the liberal and democratic spirit of England, advocated courageously the cause of India. Their "passionate eloquence" while pleading for justice and fair play to the Indians and focusing attention on their grievances made a profound impression upon the people of India. Since the time of Edmund Burke scarcely a voice had been heard in England in favour of the voiceless millions of India until John Britain sounded his warning note against the injustices systematically being done to the people of India.

From 1847 to 1880 "he worked for India as none had worked before him". In the other famous debate on Sir Charles Wood's India Bill of 1853, Bright drew the attention of the House to the "solemn and sacred trust" of the administration of India and held that there was no settled policy with regard to India. He referred to the abject poverty of the Indian people, the total neglect of the Government to the employment of Indians in offices of trust and responsibility and the unjust taxes. So great was his genuine sympathy for India that, when on a certain occasion, a responsible member in the House of Commons made unparliamentary

observations regarding the people of India. Bright indignantly observed: "I would not permit any man in my presence without rebuke to indulge in the calumnies and expression of contempt which I have recently heard poured fourth without measure upon the whole population of India". In one of his last great speeches which he made in the House of Commons on India, he pleaded for "mercy and justice" to the great Indian people.

"It is not possible", he said, "to touch a chord in the hearts of Englishmen to raise them to a sense of the miseries inflicted on that unhappy country by the crimes and blunders of our rulers here? If you have steeled your hearts against the natives, if nothing can stir you to sympathy with their miseries, at least have pity upon your own countrymen". Two years before the establishment of the Indian National Congress he was able to formulate plans for the formation of an informal Indian Committee of the Members of the British Parliament. About 50 MPs had agreed to serve on this Committee which after a short interval was revived in 1889.

Henry Fawcett

Next to John Bright, "Henry Fawcett was one of the greatest and truest friends of India in England". After he became a Member of Parliament in 1865, his whole attention was directed to the welfare of the people of India. His unremitting attention to the Indian affairs earned for him the sobriquet of "Member for India". Fawcett always maintained that"natives of India should be given a fair share in the administration of their country" and that the abler among them should be provided with honourable careers in the public services.

In fact, he moved a resolution in the House of Commons in 1868 for holding the Civil Service examinations simultaneously in India and London. Many years later, Herbert Paul was able to get through precisely the same resolution Fawcett fought for India's cause single-handed with a resoluteness of purpose, a sense of justice and with such a mastery over facts that it won the admiration of even his critics. In 1872, a huge public meeting was held in Calcutta to express India's deep gratitude to him. When he was defeated at the General Elections in 1874, a subscription was raised in India and a sum of $750 in two installments was remitted

to England to enable him to contest another seat at the earliest opportunity. Soon after this Fawcett was returned to Parliament as a Member for Hackney.

Charles Bradlaugh

In addition to Bright and Fawcett, mention should also be made among these early pioneers to the services of Charles Bradlaugh (1833-1891), who supported the Ilbert Bill, for and advocated the cause of India though out his life. He was a member of Parliamentary Reforms League in 1866 and was elected Member of Parliament in 1880. He was a great sympathizer of the Congress and, in fact, drafted a bill on the reform of the legislative council in India. He visited India and attended the session of the Indian National Congress in 1890. Pherozeshah Mehta, Chairman of the Reception Committee welcomed Charles Bradlaugh for on him had descended the mantle of John bright and Prof. Fawcett.

In his reply to the address of welcome, Bradlaugh said in his characteristic style, "For whom should I work, if not for the people? Born of the people, trusted by the people, I will die for the people. And I know no geographical or race limitations." It was at this session that he was requested to draft a skeleton scheme for the enlargement of the council and he extension of its functions and introduce it in the House of Commons.

This Bill, however, was dropped after the first meeting in 1890. He introduced another Bill in the House of Commons. It was, perhaps because of Bradlaugh's initiative that Lord Cross, the Secretary of State for India, introduced a Government measure in the Parliament which was ultimately passed as the Indian Council's Act of 1892. Bradlaugh's death in January, 1891 was regarded as a terrible loss in India for during the last three years of his life he had been really a spokesman of the Indian National Congress in the British Parliament.

Mrs. Annie Besant refers to his services in her autobiography: "His services to India in the latest years of his life were no suddenly accepted tasks. He had spoken for her; pleaded for her, for many a long year, through press and on platform and his spurs as member for India were won long ere he was Member of Parliament."

Mrs. Annie Besant

Particular mention may be made of the services rendered by Mrs. Annie Besant to India's struggle for freedom. She was an "extraordinary English woman who having passed through different phases of her life and undergone persecutions of no ordinary character", had at last made India her home and special interest. She was a dynamic force in Indian politics and rendered valuable services to the cause of national regeneration in India both from political and cultural points of view. She worked with zeal and energy to make the idea of home Rule popular in a large part of India. She was the first President of the Indian National Congress who showed by action that the Presidency "was not a passing show or a three day festivity" but involved shouldering of responsibility throughout its succeeding year. She made a significant contribution to the growth of Indian nationalism by ardent advocacy of the ancient Indian culture.

Allan Octavian Hume

The contribution of Allan Octavian Hume (1829-1912) is too well-known to need any detailed reference. On retiring from Civil Service, he refused the post of Lieutenant Governorship and devoted himself to the founding of the Indian National Congress which "would form the germ of a native Parliament if properly conducted, will constitute in a few years an unanswerable reply to the assertion that India is still wholly unfit for any form of representative institutions." He was the founder of the Indian National Congress and Gokhale rightly said in 1913: "No Indian could have started the Indian National Congress. Apart from the fact the anyone putting his hand to such a gigantic task had need to have Mr. Hume's commanding personality, even if any Indian has possessed such a personality and had come forward to start such a movement embracing all India, the officials would not have allowed it to come into existence.

If the founder of the Congress had not been a great Englishmen, and a distinquished ex-official sich was the distruct of political agitation in those days that the authorities would have at once found some way or the orher of suppressing the movement." With zeal and devotion Hume worked ceaselessly till the end of his life to keep alive th great organization he had founded. His soul-inspiring letter to the graduates of the Calcutta University (March 1, 1883) inviting them to come forward and dedicate themselves to the service of the country will ever remain a monument to his organizing ability and deep sympathy.

"If you, the picked men, the most highly educated of the nation, cannot, scorning personal ease and selfish objects, make a resolute struggle to secure greater freedom for yourselves and your country, a more impartial administration, a larger share in the management of your own affairs, then we, your friends, are wrong and our adversaries right: then are Lord Ripon's nobel aspirations for your good fruitless and visionary; then, at present at any rate all hopes of progress are at an end, and India truly neither lacks nor deserves any better Government than she now enjoys."

He reminded them that "whether in the case of individuals or nations, self-sacrifice and unselfishness are the only unfailing guides to freedom and happiness." He was in despair when the Government refused to heed to their friendly demands and instead resorted to suppressing the movement (1888-1894). "It will now be for us", he declared," to instruct the nations, the great English nation in its island home and the far greater nation of this vast continent; so that every Indian that breathes upon the sacred soil of this, our motherland, may become our comrade and co-adjutor, our supporter and if needs be, our soldier in the great war that we, like Cobden and his noble band, will wage for justice for our liberties and rights." It was mainly because of his efforts that the Indian National Congress survived in the earlier days in spite of all the repressive measures adopted by the Government.

William Wedderburn

Sir William Wedderburn (1838-1918) was closely associated with Hume in the great task of strengthening the Congress Organization. Hume and Wedderburn often had to spend money from their own pockets in order to carry on the Congress propaganda in England. It was William Wedderburn who was able, with the help of other supporters of the Congress, in getting through a resolution in the House of Commons for holding

simultaneously Civil Service examinations in England and India. It encouraged Wedderburn and he invited some of the leading independent members of the House of Commons to a dinner in order to discuss the formation of an Indian Parliamentary Committee "for the purpose of promoting combined and well-directed action among those particularly interested in Indian affairs." He was elected President of the Indian National Congress in 1889 and 1910. In 1903, when there was demoralization among the Indian people, due to the repressive measures of Lord Curzon, William Wedderburn took the initiative and published a series of articles entitled,"A Call to Arms."

These articles were meant to encourage the supporters and friends of the Congress. He advised his friends not to give up the struggle but to close their ranks and wait for the change of the ministry in England which was soon expected. "With a fresh Parliament and a awakened national consciousness, the cause of India would have a just hearing. "For seven years since his return to the House of Commons in 1893 he was a spokesman of the Congress in the British Parliament. There was hardly any important Indian question on which he did not speak. Though his success in the Parliament was far from encouraging, Wedderburn remained undaunted. Hamilton's letter shows how greatly the Secretary of State for India was annoyed at the criticism of the Government's policy by these friends of India."

He was so bitter that he declined to meet Wedderburn when the latter expressed a desire to see him with a view to clearing up misunderstandings. Hamilton use to call him and his friends contemptuously as "Wedderburn and Company." The Indian National Congress paid a handsome tribute to Hume and Wedderburn at its session held in 1908 under the chairmanship of Rash Behari Ghosh. The Resolution which was moved by Gokhale said: "As the Reforms announced by Morley were a partial frustration of the efforts made by the Congress during the last 23 years, they must be a source of great satisfaction to Hume, the Father and Founder of the Congress, William Wedderburn has laboured for the Indian cause during the last 20 years and along with other members of the British Committee deserves the thanks of the Congress on this happy occasion."

Sir Henry Cotton

Sir Henry Cotton: (1845-1915) and William Digby (1849-1904) were also ardent supporters of India's cause. Sir Henry Cotton wrote his book "New India" or "India in Transition" while he was in Civil Service in 1885. in this book he strongly stressed the need for a change in policy and called upon Englishmen to prepare themselves for "the exercise of higher function than those of mere administration". Sir Henry Cotton was also the Chairman of the Indian Parliamentary Committee (1905) which had about 200 MPs as its members. The resignation of Sir Bompfylde Fuller, Lt. Governor of the newly created province of Assam and Eastern Bengal (1905-06) was in no small measure due to the agitation carried out by Sir Henry Cotton Again, in the controversy regarding the singing of the Vande Matram, he took an active part and wrote an article in the Daily News with so English translation of the poem and tried to prove that it did not contain anything seditious. It was under his Presidentship in 1904 that the Congress resolved that at least two persons should be sent to the House of Commons from India; both the Supreme and Legislative Councils should be enlarged and given a non-official majority, Cotton strongly disapproved Sir Ramsey Macdonald's grant of separate electorates to please the minorities in India. He called it trickery and *divide et impera.*

William Digby

William Digby (1849-1904) was a journalist and Editor of *The Madras Times*. He also became Editor of India (1890-92). He was a strong supporter of the Indian National Congress and kept the British electorate informed of the Indian grievances-economic, administrative and personal. His book-*Prosperous British India – Revelation*-tried to prove that as India was under foreign domination, her wealth was being drained every year and that was a grave injustice.

C. F. Andrews

Rev. Charles Freer Andrews (1871-1940) a great friend of Gandhiji devoted his life to the service of the Congress. He was perhaps the first Britisher who held the British Government in

India responsible for the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy and described the O'Dyer's act as "a cold and calculated massacre." He contributed articles frequently to the *Manchester Guardian. The Natal Advertiser* and *The Toronto Star* regarding India's struggle for freedom. He, however, refused to join the Khilafat Agitation on the ground that to agree to it was to agree to the Ottoman Empire and to agree to any kind of Empire was to "cut the ground under the Indian demand for independence."

Keir Hardie

Keir Hardie (1856-1915) and Eardley Norton also deserve mention. The former was the Chairman of the Independent Labour Party and a Member of Parliament. He visited India in 1907 to see for himself the extent of the agitation being carried out for the annulment of the partition of Bengal. His analysis was that "the partition was the root cause of all mischief and that official repression had increased the unrest." The official opposition to *swedeshi* and patronage of Muslims was, according to Hardie, the main cause of the agitation.

Eardley Norton

Eardley Norton of the Madras Bar was an enthusiastic supporter of the Congress. In fact, he was dubbed by his countrymen as a veiled seditionist for his participation in the Congress, to which he replied:

> *"If it be sedition, gentlemen, to rebel against all wrong, if it be sedition to insist that the people should have a fair share in the administration of their own country and affairs, if it be sedition to resist class tyranny, to raise my voice against oppression, to mutiny against injustice, to insist upon a hearing before sentence, to uphold the liberties of the individual, to vindicate our common right to gradual but ever advancing reform – if this be sedition. I am right glad to be called a seditionist; and doubly, aye trebly, glad when I look around me today to know and feel I am ranked as one among such a magnificent array of seditionists."*

H. M. Hyndman

H. M. Hyndman, Editor of the *Justice* took an active interest in the Indian affairs and supported the Indian National movement.

A man of wide and deep reading, wielding most ably a singularly fascinating pen, he devoted himself to India's cause. Love for the people and sympathy for the downtrodden remained the motto of his life. He wrote articles entitled "Modern Pirates and their victims" criticizing the British Government for their repressive policy in India. He published a book *The Truth about India* in 1921 in which he condemned the Muslim demand for separate representation. He alleged that the Simla Deputation had been officially engineered. He severely criticized the British Government for the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy in 1919.

Wedgewood Benn

Wedgewood Benn was another statesman who took a sympathetic interest in Indian affairs. As secretary of State in the Labour Government, he has tried to impress upon the Viceroy the necessity of reconciliation with the Congress. The die-hard British bureaucrats, however, foiled all his efforts. He supported the Congress demand for a Constituent Assembly in 1939 which was not acceptable to the Muslim League.

Josiah Wedgewood

Josiah Wedgewood (1872-1943), Labour M. P. criticized Ramsay Mecdonald's introduction of separate electorates in India. The Hindu-Muslim communal riots from 1921-1926, which resulted in much bloodshed were regarded by Col. Wedgewood as "cutting of wisdom teeth." About the Simon Commission he wrote to Lala Lajpat Rai describing the official policy as 'deadly and stupid.' He hoped that the Commission would be boycotted and expressed pleasure at this prospect. He said: "There is no need to stand in the witness box and be cross-examined by persons of no great importance who had not shown any interest in your views and feelings."

W. S. Blunt

Wilfred Scawen Blunt (1840-1922) took deep interest in Indian affairs and wrote three works in India, viz. *Ideas about India; India under Ripon;* and *My Diaries.* He visited India twice in 1879 and again 1883. "A man of wealth of connections, a minor poet, a horse-breeder, a passionate orientalist and an anti-imperialist, he

was indeed a remarkable man." His visit to India convinced him that the Indians were capable of governing themselves far better than the British. One of the chief defects of the British Indian Administration was in Blunt's view the growth of race prejudices. "The ill feeling now existing in India", he wrote "if it be not allayed by a more generous treatment will in a few years make continued connection between England and India altogether impossible." He declared; "The huge mammal, India's symbol, is a docile beast and may be ridden by a child. He is sensible, temperate and easily attached But ill, treatment he will not bear for ever and when he is angered in earnest, his vast bulk alone makes him dangerous and puts it beyond the strength of the strongest to guide him or control him."

He criticized Syed Ahmad, the Aligarh leader for his hostility to the Congress and his advice to the Muslims was that "the policy of abstention recommended in opposition of my advice by late Syed Ahmad of Aligarh and so long followed, should cease. Much ground has been lost, I fear, by this long period of inaction but it is a ground that can be recovered and I trust now to see the Mohammedan body taking its full-shae in the movement for self-government." It will be interesting to note that when Madan Lal Dhingra shot dad Sir Wyllie Curzon in London in 1909, Blunt defended this young man whom he called a Mazzini. He admired his courage and signed for 500 equally fearless men who could achieve freedom for India. He was greateful to the authorities for having chosen his own birthday, August 17 for Dhingra's execution. After Dingra was hanged, Blunt praised his great fortitude and severely criticized the British public for its besotted refusal to acknowledge his greatness and warned that "the day of reckoning was not far off". When he died on September 12, 1922, the *Manchester Guardian* praised his campaign against the British Empire and wrote, "at most periods in history, there have been English men who have been ready to defend unpopular causes; Blunt belonged to that noble line and added honour to its fine records."

Harold Laski

The National Movement in India found its most ardent supporters in the Labour Party. The great thinker and philosopher

Harold Laski (1893-1950) was an ardent friend of India. He was the member and Chairman of the Labour Party Executive Committee and author of many books. He criticized the Simon Commission Report as it did not include proposals for establishing India as a self-governing Unit in the Comonwealth of a permanent basis. Laski asked for a fixed date about three years after the end of the war for giving India Dominion Status and declared that the Indians would work out their Constitution within this period. He was sure that Jinnah and his friends would come to terms with the Congress. He was always sympathetic to the Congress cause and when the Round Table Conference failed in 1931 he put the blame for the failure on the communal Muslims. He cursed religion as a social disease and blamed Ramsay MacDonald's weakness, vanity and indecisivencess for not compelling an agreement.

Ramsay MacDonald

The role played by Sir Ramsay Macdonald (1886-1927) in India's struggle for freedom is still to be analysed. He was Prime Minister of Great Britain in 1924 and again from 1929-35 and Leader of the Labour Party from 1911-1914. Such was his popularity in India in the earlier stages of his career that he was invited to preside over the 1911 Session of the Indian National Congress but was uable to do so on account of his wife's death. He was foremost among those who condemned the Partition of Bengal. Later on he declared that the British Government was prepared to recognize the all important principle of executive responsibility to the legislature, except for certain safeguards, notably Defence, External Affairs, the maintenance of tranquility in the realm and the guarantee of financial stability.

He was, however, responsible for the introduction of separate electorates; Gandhiji undertook a fast unto death in disapproval of separate electorates given by Mac-Donald's 'Communal Award' to the depressed classes. MacDonald however, lamented that the "hope of united India, an India conscious of a unity of purpose and destiny seems to be the vainest of the vain dreams". He played a notable part in the appointment of the Simon Commission. It was measures like these that prompted Stanley Baldwin to congratulate him for his adoption of Conservatism. Winston Churchill tauntingly promised him "his cordial cooperation in the

Government's self-imposed task of carrying out the conservative policy of making the world wiser if not safer for capitalism". Lloyd George called the MacDonald "the last of the conservatives". Even Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru was convinced that the British Labour Government under MacDonald would not be of any special benefit to the Indian National Movement.

H. N. Brailsford

H. N. Brailsford, a labour journalist and an M. P. was another important supporter of the Indian National Movement. He wrote frequently about Indian affairs and "condemned partition of Bengal as an autocratic act and clumsy one." He was against the creation of Pakistan which he thought was "wicked and a crime against civilization." In 1936 he favoured the handing over of all powers to the Congress who would then win support of the Muslims by offering the presidency of the Constituent Assembly to "the ageing and ambitious Jinnah." The creation of Pakistan was to him a "reactionary step implying a reversion to some medieval conception of theocracy."

Among those who helped to further the Indian cause the names of Fenner Brockway, John Bracket, Sir Henry Polik, Reginald Sorenson, and Miss Madeleina Slade popularly known as Mira Behn may also be mentioned. This list is however far from complete and many names will have to be added when an exhaustive work is undertaken on this important project.

12

Congress Presidents and their Role

WOMESH CHANDRA BONNERJEE (1844-1906)

President-Bombay, 1885; Allahabad, 1892

Womesh Chandra was born on December 29, 1844, in Calcutta in an upper middle class Brahmin family of considerable social standing. His career began in 1862 when he joined the firm of W. P. Gillanders, Attorneys of the Calcutta Supreme Court, as a clerk. In this post he acquired a good knowledge of law which greatly helped him in his later career.

In 1864 he was sent to England where he joined the Middle Temple with a scholarship and was called to the Bar in June 1867. On his return to Calcutta in 1868, he found a patron in Sir Charles Paul, Barrister-at-Law of the Calcutta High Court. Another barrister, J. P. Kennedy, also greatly helped him to establish his reputation as a lawyer. Within a few years he became the most sought after barrister in the High Court. He was the first Indian to act as a Standing Counsel, in which capacity he officiated four times. In 1883 he defended Surendranath Banerjea in the famous Contempt of Court Case against him in the Calcutta High Court.

A moderate in politics, he was attracted to it quite early in life. Before proceeding to England to study law he had helped Girish Chandra Ghosh to start the newspaper Bengalee, for which he used to compile a summary of weekly news on an honorarium of Rs. 20/-a month. He worked in this capacity for about three years. He carried on his political activities even during his student life in England where he helped in the establishment of the London

Indian Society which was later amalgamated with the East India Association.

He presided over the first session of the Indian National Congress held at Bombay in 1885. In the 1886 session held at Calcutta he proposed the formation of standing committees of the Congress in each province for the better co-ordination of its work and it was on this occasion that he advocated that the Congress should confine its activities to political matters only, leaving the question of social reforms to other organisations.

An eminent lawyer, Womesh Chandra was severe in his denunciation of the jury system as it prevailed in India since the introduction of the "Amendment of the Criminal Procedure Code" by the Law member Sir James Fitz James Stephen which empowered the judges to enhance sentences on appeal. The salt tax which much later assumed historical significance under Mahatma Gandhi was criticised by him as an unjust tax on "almost the chief necessity of life" in a poverty stricken land where people could hardly afford two meals a day. To propagate India's case in England a London Agency had been established in 1888 with the help of Digby. Dadabhai Naoroji, and Womesh Chandra raised funds in India for its support.

Womesh Chandra advocated the establishment of a Royal Commission for the reduction of military expenditure and its just apportionment between England and India. Like other nationalists of the day, he wanted industrialisation of the country and welcomed the Swadeshi Movement. He represented Calcutta University in the Bengal Legislative Council in 1894-95. In 1902 he went to England to settle down there on grounds of health and started practising in the Privy Council. In England he carried on his political activities by delivering speeches on Indian affairs. He also made two unsuccessful attempts to enter Parliament.

Surendranath Banerjea thought that "he was not an agitator in the ordinary sense" and believed that "his association with the (Congress) movement gave it a dignity and an air of responsibility".-D. P. Sinha

It is the British professors who have discoursed eloquently to us on the glorious constitution of their country; it is the British merchants who have shown to us how well to deal with the commodities of our countrv: it is the British engineers who have annihilated distance and enabled us to come together for our deliberation from all parts of the empire; it is the British planters who have shown us how best to raise the products of our soil it is all these in other words, it is all the influence which emanate from British rule in India that have made the Congress the success it is,

From the Presidential Address-W. C. Bonnerjee

I.N.C., Session, 1892, Allahabad

DADADABHAI NAOROJI 1825-1917

President-Calcutta, 1886, Lahore, 1893; Calcutta, 1906

Dadabhai Naoroji was born in Bombay in September 4, 1825 in a priestly Parsi family. As a consequence of his outstanding performance at the Elphinstone College, Dadabhai obtained the Clare Scholarship. He became a graduate in 1845. In 1916, he as awarded the Honorary degree of LL.D. by the Bombay University.

On June 27, 1855 he left for London to join business as a partner in Cama's firm in London. Four years later he started his own firm, having returned to India in the meantime. He travelled back and forth on Business between India and England during 1865 to 1876. In 1886 he went to England to contest the elections to Parliament and in 1907 to espouse the cause of the freedom of India from British rule.

Foreign travel left its mark on his character and personality. Himself a product of liberal western education, he was an admirer of the western system of education. In India, his friends included Sorabjee Bengali the social reformer, Khursetji Cama, Kaisondas Mulji, K. R. Cama, the Orientalist, Naoroji Furdoonji, Jamsedji Tata, and some Indian Princes. Among his younger friends were R. G. Bhandarkar, the Orientalist, N.G. Chandavarkar, the nationalist reformer, Pherozeshah Mehta, G. K. Gokhale, Dinshaw Wacha and M. K. Gandhi.

Soon after graduation in 1845, he became the first Indian to be appointed Professor at Elphinstone. He taught in the special classes held for the spread of women's education. In March 1856,

he was nominated as Professor of Gujarati in the University College, London, a post he continued to hold till 1865-66. During this period Dadabhai took a keen interest in and laboured hard for the spread of education.

On December 1, 1866 he founded the East India Association, London, whose scope for activity was wider, and became its Secretary.

In 1874 he was appointed the Dewan of Baroda and a year later, on account of differences with the Maharaja and the Resident, he resigned from the Dewanship. In July 1875 he was elected a Member of the Municipal Corporation, Bombay. In 1876 he resigned and left for London. He was appointed as Justice of the Peace in 1883 and was elected to the Bombay Municipal Corporation for the second time.

In August 1885 he joined the Bombay Legislative Council at the invitation of the Governor, Lord Reay.

On January 31, 1885, when the Bombay Presidency Association came into being, he was elected as one of its Vice-Presidents. At the end of the same year, he took a leading part in the founding of the Indian National Congress and became its President thrice in 1886, 1893 and 1906.

In 1883 he started a newspaper called the Voice of India. Dadabhai was a frequent contributor of articles and papers to various journals and magazines. In 1887 he gave evidence before the public service commission. In 1902 he was elected as a Member of the Liberal Party in the House of Commons, representing Central Finsbury. He was a firm believer in Parliamentary democracy. He is known in the history of Indian economic thought for his pioneering work in assessing India's national income.

He founded several important organisations and belonged to many leading societies and institutions, both in India and the U.K. Some of the important organisations which he helped to found are the Indian National Congress, the East India Association, London, the Royal Asiatic Society of Bombay and so on. He was a leading social reformer of the second half of the nineteenth century. He did not believe in caste restrictions and was a pioneer of women's education and an upholder of equal laws for men and

women. A keen Zoroastrian, but catholic in outlook, with friends among non-Parsis, like Hume, Wedderburn, Badruddin Tyabji, Dr. Bhau Daji, K. T. Telang, G. K. Gokhale, he expounded the need for purity in thought, speech and action in his book "The Duties of the Zoroastrians".

He was a prominent nationalist of progressive views. He belonged to the school of moderates, and was a great believer in constitutional methods. Although he was a champion of Swadeshi, he was not against the use of machines for organising key industries in the country. He urged Tata to raise Indian capital for his iron and steel plants.

Known as 'The Grand Old Man of India" Dadabhai Naoroji was a great public figure during 1845-1917. Through the innumerable societies and organisations with which he was associated and his contributions to organs of public opinion, he voiced the grievances of the Indian people and proclaimed their aims, ideals and aspirations to the world at large. He won with effortless ease high distinction on many fronts and will always be remembered in the history of the national movement. -V. K. R. V. Rao

Let us always remember that we are all children of our mother country. Indeed, I have never worked in any other spirit than that I am an Indian, and owe duty to my country and all my countrymen. Whether I am a Hindu, a Mohammedan, a Parsi, a Christian, or any other creed, I am above all an Indian. Our country is India; our nationality is Indian.

From the Presidential Address-Dadabhai Naoroji

I.N.C. Session, 1893, Lahore

BADRUDDIN TYABJI (1844-1906)

President-Madras, 1887

Badruddin Tyabji (Tyab Ali) was born in Bombay on October 10, 1844. His father was the scion of an old Cambay emigrant Arab family.

After passing the London Matriculation he joined the Middle Temple, became a Barrister (April 1867)-the first Indian Barrister in Bombay-and rose rapidly in the profession. In 1895, as his

health failed he accepted a Judgeship of the Bombay High Court. This, as Sir Pherozeshah Mehta stated, was as enthusiastically welcomed by the Hindus and the Parsis as by the Muslims. He acted as Chief Justice in 1902, the first Indian to hold this post in Bombay. He was known as a great Judge and for his courage and impartiality, typically shown by his granting bail to Tilak in a sensational case after it had been rejected thrice by others, and by admonishing eminent British counsels for denigrating the Indian National Congress and Indian character. He said, "I have always regarded it (Congress Presidentship) as the highest honour, higher than being on this Bench... let me tell the Counsel that in my Court no contemptuous reference to that body will be permitted."

Badruddin entered public life after three years at the Bar. In July 1871, he was prominent in the agitation for an elective Bombay Municipal Corporation, and topped the list of those subsequently elected on that body. From then on, Badruddin Tyabji, Pherozeshah Mehta and Kashinath Telang were popularly known (in that order) as "The Triumvirate", "The Three Stars", of Bombay's public life. In 1882 he became a Member of the Bombay Legislative Council, but resigned in 1886 for reasons of health. In 1885 he helped to found the Bombay Presidency Association and virtually ran it all by himself. Soon afterwards, the Indian National Congress held its first session in Bombay under its auspices; and Badruddin and Camruddin (his brother) were among its delegates. Urgent business in Cambay prevented their attendance, which their opponents exploited, alleging that Muslims were boycotting the Congress. Badruddin vigorously denied this, declaring that he had 'denounced all communal and sectarian prejudices." He missed the second Session also due to ill health, but was unanimously elected President of its third Session in Madras (1887).

Camruddin and he were principally responsible for establishing the Anjuman-I-Islam in Bombay (1876) "for the betterment and uplift of Mussalmans in every direction". Its working principle, defined by Badruddin, was "not to take the initiative when the interests of Mussalmans were common with the rest of the people of India, but to consider it its duty to take initiative if the interests of Mussalmans alone were affected, or if they were affected more than those of others" (1887).

Badruddin's own education and background, a harmonious blend of the East and the West, made him acutely conscious of its lack, particularly among the Muslims.

Indian attention, he thought, was too exclusively focussed on politics. He felt that an advanced type of representative Government was useless if the majority was ignorant. Therefore, he campaigned against "Purdah" all his life, holding that it went far beyond the Quranic injunctions. His was the first Muslim family to discard it; his daughters were the first to be sent abroad for education. He supported the Age of Consent Bill (1891), despite Hindu and Muslim opposition.

Badruddin's all pervasive intellectual and personal distinction enabled him to exert considerable influence for worthy causes on the more enlightened Englishmen, without loss of personal or national dignity; in fact, with an accretion to both. He was not only, as Mahatma Gandhi wrote, "......for years, a decisive factor in the deliberations of the Congress" but one of its creators. It gained its national character by Muslim participation largely through his influence.

In this the difference between his outlook and that of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, the other outstanding Muslim leader of the time, was striking. On Badruddin fell the main burden of counteracting the Two-Nation theory. This he did without abating a jot of his zeal' for the advancement of the backward Muslims; and it was most remarkable that he succeeded in obtaining widespread non-Muslim co-operation for it. Among Muslims, Badruddin was the first to create a secular political consciousness; and nationally he was a pioneer in making it the Indian ideal.

-Badr-Ud-Din Tyabji

Be moderate in your demands, be just in your criticism, be accurate in your facts, be logical in your conclusions, and you may rest assured that any propositions you may make to our rulers will be received with that benign consideration which is the characteristic of a strong and enlightened Government.

From the Presidential Address-Badruddin Tyabji

I.N.C. Session, 1887, Madras

GEORGE YULE (1829-1892)

President-Allahabad, 1888 Having had for its first three Presidents a Hindu, a Parsi and a Muslim respectively, the fourth Congress which met in Allahabad, turned, for the first time, to a non-Indian for its Presidential chair. In doing so, it thought of one who was not unfamiliar to Indians as one genuinely interested in their welfare and progress. George Yule. Under friendly pressure W. C. Bonnerjee persuaded him to accept the invitation of the Congress to preside over the Allahabad session. He belonged to the business community. He was the chief of the well-known Andrew Yule and Co. in Calcutta. He was also Sheriff of Calcutta for sometime and President of the Indian Chamber of Commerce.

Yule was widely known in Indian circles for his breadth of outlook, liberal views and marked sympathy for Indian aspirations. Surendranath Banerjea who knew him intimately described him as "a hard headed Scotchman who saw straight into the heart of things, and never hesitated to express himself with the bluntness in which a Scotchman never fails, if he wants to show it." The alacrity with which he accepted the invitation of the Congress and the ability with which he conducted the Allahabad session, made him both a popular and powerful figure in the public life of India and helped to enlarge India's national perspective.

The Congress deputation that went to England in 1889, to press upon the British public the political reforms, which it advocated, received from Yule much help. Indeed, he remained a staunch friend of the Congress and, even during his retirement in England, he actively espoused its cause as a member of the British Committee. On his early death in 1892, touching tributes were paid to his memory by the leaders of the Congress.

Throughout his Indian career, George Yule won the respect, the admiration, and the regard of everybody with whom he came in contact-Indian and European, official and non-official.

Now, gentlemen, I will state more definitely the change we desire. We want the Legislative Council to be expanded to an extent that will admit of the representation of the various interests in the country, as far as that may be practicable. We want half the Councils to be elected, the other half to be in the appointment

of Government, and we are willing that the right of veto should be with the Executive.

From the Presidential Address-George Yule

I.N.C. Session, 1888, Allahabad

SIR WILLIAM WEDDERBURN (1838-1918)

President-Bombay, 1889; Allahabad, 1910

Sir William was born in March 1838 in Edinburgh, Scotland. The Wedderburns of the Scottish Border were a family of great antiquity. In 1859 William appeared for the Indian Civil Service examination. He left for India in 1860 and began official duty at Dharwar as an Assistant Collector. He was appointed Acting Judicial Commissioner in Sind and Judge of the Sadar Court in 1874. In 1882 he became the District and Sessions Judge of Poona. At the time of his retirement in 1887, he was the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bombay.

During his service in India, William, Wedderburn's attention was focussed on famine, the poverty of the Indian peasantry, the problem of agricultural indebtedness and the question of reviving the ancient village system. His concern with these problems brought him in touch with the Indian National Congress. After his retirement, William Wedderburn threw himself heart and soul into it. He presided over the fourth Congress held in Bombay in 1889.

Meanwhile, after the death of his brother David, William succeeded to the baronetcy in 1879. He entered Parliament in 1893 as a Liberal member and sought to voice India's grievances in the House. He formed the Indian Parliamentary Committee with which he was associated as Chairman from 1893 to 1900. In 1895, William Wedderburn represented India on the Welby Commission (i.e. Royal Commission) on Indian Expenditure. He also began participating in the activities of the Indian Famine Union, set up in June 1901, for investigation into famines and proposing preventive measures. He came to India in 1904 to attend the 20th session of the Indian National Congress in Bombay, which was presided over by Sir Henry Cotton. He was again invited in 1910 to preside over the 25th session. He remained the Chairman of

the British Committee of the Congress from July 1889 until his death.

As a Liberal, William. Wedderburn believed in the principle of self-government. Along with the founders of the Indian National Congress, he believed in the future of India in partnership with the British Commonwealth and welcomed the formal proclamation made by the British Government on August 20, 1917, that the goal of British policy in India was the progressive establishment of self-government. Some members of the old order condemned him as a disloyal officer, for his continual tirades against the bureaucracy, his incessant pleading for the Indian peasant and for his stand on constitutional reforms for India.

William Wedderburn's main contribution to the promotion of national consciousness was his life-long labour on behalf of the Indian Reform Movement. The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms were naturally regarded by him as the crowning glory of his life's work.

-Sumanta Banerjee

What are the practical objects of the Congress movement? They are, to revive the national life, and to increase the material prosperity of country; and what better objects could we have before us? Lastly, as regards our methods, they are open and constitutional, and based solely on India's reliance upon British justice and love of fair play.

From the Presidential Address-Sir William Wedderburn

I.N.C. Session, 1889, Bombay

SIR PHEROZESHAH MEHTA (1845-1915)

President-Calcutta, 4 1890

Sir Pherozeshah Mehta was born in Bombay, on August 4, 1845, where he spent the greater part of his life. His father, Merwanji Mehta, belonged to a family of merchants. Pherozeshah entered the Lincoln's Inn in 1864 and spent three years qualifying himself. Called to the Bar in 1868, he left for home in September 1868. While in England, he used to frequent the house of Dadabhai Naoroji, and these visits were to remain important influences in moulding his liberal outlook. Several of his close friends were

liberals; besides Telang and Badruddin Tyabji (who along with Pherozeshah were described as "the three bright boys of Bombay"), Ranade, Gokhale, Wacha, W. C. Bonnerjee and Bal Mohan Wagle were close to Pherozeshah. This made him a part of the Liberal School of Indian politics. His antipathy to violent methods in politics alienated him from Tilak and Pal, his innate trust in constitutionalism, his dislike of regional and communal developments, made him criticise Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. These were characteristics that distinguished the Liberal School in Indian politics.

Education, both primary and higher, absorbed his interests throughout his life. He saw in education the means by which India could modernize itself rapidly; he laid great emphasis on the value of English. He had a hand in the establishment of a Swadeshi bank, the Central Bank of India. Pherozeshah is remembered mainly as the maker of the modern Bombay Municipal Corporation which he fostered and served in a distinguished manner for nearly half a century.

He was mainly responsible for the founding of an English newspaper, the Bombay Chronicle (April 1913), which became an important agency for expressing Indian public opinion.

In the nationalist movement, in the forming and running of political associations and in serving Governmental official institutions. Pherozeshah had a notable record. In the proceedings of the Indian National Congress (in its founding he had a distinctive hand) he held an important and commanding position.

His main endeavour was to keep the extremists from dominating the Congress, and in this he was largely successful. He presided over the Congress session held in Calcutta (1890) and was twice President of the Reception Committee when the Congress sessions met in Bombay (1889 and 1904). In the different Congress sessions, which he attended, he either moved or supported resolutions for reforming the administration of the country. Along with Telang, he founded the Bombay Presidency Association (1885) and served as its Secretary.

Honours came to him thick and fast. He was made a C.I.E. in 1894 and 1904 saw him Knighted. In 1915 the University of

Bombay decided to confer upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Law. He was a much admired man. -R. Srinivasan

All movements of the kind in which we are concerned pass through several phases as they run their course. The first is one of ridicule. That is followed, as the movement progresses, by one of abuse, which is usually succeeded by partial concession and misapprehension of aim, accompanied by warnings against taking "big jumps into the unknown". The final stage of all is a substantial adoption of the object of the movement, with some expression of surprise that it was not adopted before. Well, gentlemen, we have pretty well passed the first two stages. We have survived the ridicule, the abuse, and the misrepresentation. We have survived the charge of sedition and disloyalty. We have survived the charge of being a microscopic minority. We have also survived the charge of being guilty of the atrocious crime of being educated, and we have even managed to survive the grievous charge of being all Babus in disguise.

From The Presidential Address-Pherozeshah Mehta

I.N.C. Session, 1890, Calcutta.

P ANANDA CHARLU (1843-1908)

President-Nagpur, 1891

Panambakkam Ananda Charlu was born of orthodox Brahmin parents in August 1843 in the village of Kadamanchi, Chittoor District, Andhra Pradesh. He became apprentice to Kayali Venkatapathi, a leading advocate in Madras, and was formally enrolled in the High Court in 1869. He built a lucrative practice and became the leader of the Bar on the Original Side. It was in his Chambers that the Madras Advocates' Association was born in 1899.

Like most of the intelligentsia of those days, Ananda Charlu took considerable interest in public affairs, which meant mostly political affairs, and this found expression through a variety of channels. He contributed articles regularly to leading journals like the Native Public Opinion and the Madrasi In 1878 he helped G. Subrahmanya Aiyar and C. Viraraghavachariar in starting the Hindu and became a frequent contributor to it.

He was especially good as an organiser. He started the Triplicane Literary Society in 1884, of which he was elected President, and this did much for the political awakening of the people.

In 1884 he joined several public workers in Madras and founded the Madras Mahajana Sabha which became the leading public forum for years. These Associations were the counterparts in Madras of organisations like the British Indian Association in Calcutta and Bombay. He started branches of the Sabha in districts and got them affiliated to it.

In 1885 he was one of the seventy-two delegates to the first session of the Indian National Congress held in Bombay. From that time on he attended almost every one of its sessions and took an active part in its proceedings.

The impression which he produced on the delegates resulted naturally in his being elected President of the Nagpur Session in 1891. In the course of his address he criticised the views of those who claimed that India was not a nation. He pleaded for Legislative Councils becoming more representative in character and for the removal of racial discrimination in enlisting Indians as recruits to the Volunteer Corps.

He was chosen to the Working Committee of the Congress in 1891, and elected as Secretary in 1892. He was also selected as a member of several deputations which made representations to the Government.

He was always in favour of agitation on. strictly constitutional lines. He ranged naturally on the side of the moderates in the Congress in 1907-8, but he passed away before he could do anything to avert the split between the moderates and the extremists.

Both the public and the Government came to recognise him in due course as a respected all-India leader, and the Government conferred on him the distinction of Rai Bahadur and C.I.E. -M. Venkatarangaiya

We have accomplished the great and palpable fact that the Hindu and Mohammedan populations of this country-long separated from one another-long divided by parochial differences-long kept apart and estranged from one another by sectional and

sectarian jealousies-have at last recognised one another as members of a single brotherhood.

From the Presidential Address-P. Ananda Charlu,

I.N.C Session, 1891, Nagpur

ALFRED WEBB

President-Madras, 1894

The third non-Indian to have presided over the Indian National Congress, Alfred Webb, was an Irishman. There is little data about him available. Proposing him to the Chair, S Ramaswami Mudaliar said:

"In our choice of a President to rule this great Assembly we shall be giving practical testimony of our anxious desire to knit in the closest bonds of union and fellowship, with our Western brethren, under whose benign guidance an all-wise and beneficient Providence has placed us. I have therefore to propose the name of one who has evinced a very deep concern for the welfare of the people of this country and has always made the cause of the masses the chief aim of his life and who, in his own words, is "the soilder in political warfare to go to any land whenever ordered"- the quiet and unostentatious. member for West Waterford-Alfred Webb of the British Parliament."

It would be interesting to recall what the great Wedderburn said of Alfred Webb, on his return from India as Congress President, at a luncheon at the National Liberal Club, London:

"Public opinion in India within the last ten years has become consolidated and organised, and is able now to give a clearer voice to its views through the Indian National Congress, and our great object has been to bring these forces together to associate the Indian Parliamentary Party in the House of Commons with the Indian National Congress, and to get them to cooperate. In that sense, Mr. Webb has done good service. He has visited India as a messenger of peace and goodwill. He has been a sort of dove out of the dark, and those who have heard his words of wisdom and gentleness may add that he has brought an olive-branch in his mouth. I think he has shown that all classes in India, official and non-official, European and Indian, may work together

harmoniously for the general welfare of India." Politics are amongst the most ennobling, most comprehensive spheres of human activity, and none should eventually be excluded from their exercise. There is much that is sad, much that is deplorable about them. Yet they remain, and ever will remain. The most effective field upon which to work for the good of our fellows. The political atmosphere, that which we here hope to breathe, is one into which no thought of "greed or lust, or low ambition" should enter. We desire the good of all. We work for all.

From the Presidential Address-Alfred Webb,

I.N.C. Session, 1894, Madras

SURENDRANATH BANERJEA (1848-1925)

President-Poona, 1895; Ahmedabad, 1902

Surendranath Banerjea was born on November 10, 1848 in Calcutta. He got his school education in the Parental Academic Institution, attended chiefly by Anglo-Indian boys. He graduated from the Calcutta University in 1868, and proceeded to England to compete for the Indian Civil Services. He passed the competitive examination but as there was some trouble over his exact age he was declared disqualified.

On his return to India in June 1875, Surendranath began his new career as a Professor of English. He took full advantage of his teaching profession to infuse Indian students with a new spirit. He was the most eloquent speaker that India had so far produced. This transference of Bengali youth's interest and energy to national regeneration constitutes the first great contribution of Surendranath to the national cause of India.

His second great contribution was the founding of the Indian Association on July 26,1876 which was intended to be the centre of an all-India political movement. For the first time there emerged the idea of India as a political unit. Thus he had set the stage for a more practical demonstration of the newly awakened sense of political unity of India in the shape of an all India political conference sponsored by the Indian Association. The first session of the National Conference, held in Calcutta on December 28, 29, and 30, 1883, was attended by more than a hundred delegates

from different parts of India. The second session was more representative than the first and the plan of holding annual sessions of the Conference in different parts of India was accepted. For the first time in history a realistic picture of the political unity of India was held out before the public eye, forestalling the Indian National Congress. Immediately after the conclusion of the second session of the National Conference in Calcutta, the first session of the Indian National Congress was held in Bombay (December 28, 1885). Surendranath was not invited to the first session of the Congress until the very last moment when, preoccupied with the second session of the National Conference in Calcutta, he could not attend it. The Calcutta session of the Congress in 1886 marked a distinct advance in its tone and sprit and henceforth Surendranath played a leading part in the National Congress; he became its President twice in 1895 and 1902.

He had reached the climax of his political career in 1906, and then set in the decline. The cleavage between the Moderates and the Extremists led to the steady decline of the Moderate Party of which Surendranath was the strongest pillar. The Home Rule league and the emergence of Gandhiji made the people lose faith in the programme of the Moderate Party, and the publication of the Montagu Chelmsford Report was the signal of war between the Moderates and the rest. The Moderates went down, and when they walked out of the Congress in 1918, Surendranath along with them practically walked out of India's struggle for freedom. He died in 1925.

We cannot afford to have a schism in our camp. Already they tell us that it is a Hindu Congress, although the presence of our Mohammedan friends completely contradicts the statement. Let it not be said that this is the Congress of one social party rather than that of another. It is the Congress of United India of Hindus and Mohammedans, of Christians, of Parsis and of Sikhs, of those who would reform their social customs and those who would not. Here we stand upon a common platform-here we have all agreed to bury our social and religious differences.

From the Presidential Address-Surendranath Banerjea

I.N.C. Session, 1895, Poona

RAHIMTULLA M SAYANI (1847-1902)

President-Calcutta, 1896

Rahimtulla M. Sayani was born in Kutch on April 5, 1847. He belonged to a Khoja Muslim Family which subsequently of repudiated the discipleship of the Aga Khan. Born in humble circumstances, Sayani achieved public eminence and professional excellence in the field of law by hard work and perseverance.

He began his public life as an elected member of the Bombay Municipal Corporation (1876) and was elected President of the Corporation in 1888. and the Sheriff of Bombay in 1885.

Sayani served a long spell as a legislator. He was elected to the Bombay Legislative Council (1880-90 and 1894-96) and the Imperial Legislative Council (1896.98).

Sayani was appointed by the Government in 1874 as a member of the Commission to consider the laws of interstate and testamentary succession in the Khoja community. He was associated with the Indian National Congress since its inception and was one of the two Indian Muslims who attended its first session in 1885. He was a member of the committee formed by the Congress in 1886 to consider the question of Public Services. He was one of the representatives from Bombay on the Congress Executive Committee (Indian Congress Committee) formed in 1899. He presided over the 12th annual session of the Congress held at Calcutta in 1896. His presidential address hailed by a contemporary journal as the "best delivered so far" was notable for the close attention it paid to the economic and financial aspects of the British rule in India.

Sayani urged the Muslims to join the Congress which he regarded as representing "all that is loyal and patriotic, enlightened and influential, progressive and disinterested." Enumerating Muslims' objections to joining the Congress, he refuted them point by point. An advocate of Western education, Sayani considered it particularly essential for the Muslim.

That we should endeavour to promote personal intimacy and friendship amongst all the great communities of India, to develop and consolidate sentiments of national growth and unity, to weld them together into one nationality, to effect a moral union amongst

them, to remove the taunt that we are not a nation, but only a congeries of races and creeds which have no cohesion in then and to bring about stronger and stronger friendly ties of common nationality.

From the Presidential Address-Rahimtulla M. Sayani

I.N.C. Session, 1896, Calcutta.

SIR C SANKARAN NAIR (1857-1934)

President-Amraoti. 1897

Sir Sankaran was born on July 11, 1857 on the Malabar Coast. His early education began in the traditional style at home and continued in schools in Malabar, till he passed the Arts examination with a first class from the Provincial School at Calicut. Then he joined the Presidency College, Madras. In 1877 he took his Arts degree, and two years later secured the Law degree from the Madras Law College.

Sir Sankaran Nair started as a lawyer in 1880 in the High Court of Madras. In 1884, the Madras Government appointed him as a member of the Committee for an enquiry into the state of Malabar. Till 1908, he was the Advocate-General to the Government and an Acting Judge from time to time. In 1908 he became a permanent Judge in the High Court of Madras and held the post till 1915.

In the meantime, in 1902, the Viceroy, Lord Curzon appointed him Secretary to the Raleigh University Commission, In recognition of his services he was awarded the title 'Commander of the Indian Empire' by the King-Emperor in 1904 and in 1912 he was Knighted. He became a member of the Viceroy's Council in 1915 with the charge of the Education portfolio. As member, he wrote in 1919 two famous Minutes of Dissent in the Despatches on Indian Constitutional Reforms, pointing out the various defects of British rule in India and suggesting reforms. For an Indian to offer such criticism and make such demands was incredible in those days. The British government accepted most of his recommendations.

He played an active part in the Indian National movement which was gathering force in those days. In 1897, when the First Provincial Conference met in Madras, he was invited to preside

over it. The same year, when the Indian National Congress assembled at Amraoti, he was chosen its President. In a masterly address he referred to the highhandedness of foreign administration, called for reforms and asked for self-government for India with Dominion Status. In 1900 he was a Member of the Madras Legislative Council. His official life from 1908 to 1921 interrupted his activities as a free political worker. In 1928 he was the President of the Indian Central Committee to co-operate with the Simon Commission. The Committee prepared a well-argued report asking for Dominion Status for India. When the Viceregal announcement came granting Dominion Status as the ultimate goal for India, Sir Sankaran Nair retired from active politics.

Undoubtedly he was an ardent nationalist. He was, however, not a fanatic nationalist who was blind to what was good in other people. Thus he admired the British democratic institutions, patriotism, and industry. At the same time he courageously pointed out the harmful effects of British rule on the Indian economy. In politics he was a liberal and a moderate.

Sir Sankaran's appearance was impressive as were his attainments. In his epoch he reached the top in every sphere of activity which he entered. He was a patriot, who worked for the welfare of his people. He was ahead of his times in social reform and here his contribution was substantial.

We must insist on perfect equality. Inequality means race inferiority, national abasement. Acquisition, therefore, of all civil rights conferred on Englishmen, removal of all disabilities on Indians as such-these must be our aim.

From the Presidential Address-Sir C. Sankaran Nair

I.N.C. Session, 1897, Amraoti

ANANDA MOHAN BOSE (1847-1906)

President-Madras, 1898

India's first Wrangler, leader of the Brahmo Samaj, pioneer of the freedom movement, educationist and social reformer, Ananda Mohan Bose was born on September 23, 1847 in Myrmensingh (Bengal) in an upper middle class family. After his schooling he left for England and enrolled himself as a student

of Higher Mathematics at Christ Church College, Cambridge. Simultaneously, he was called to the Bar in 1874.

On returning home, Ananda Mohan plunged into his public career alongside Surendranath Banerjea and Sivanath Sastri. During this time he came also under the influence of Devendranath Tagore and Keshab Chandra Sen, for both of whom he entertained the highest regard.

Ananda Mohan's interest in the political scene in India may be dated from 1871 when he first met Surendranath Banerjea in England. On his return to India in 1874 and right up to the days of the Swadeshi movement in 1905, the two were closely associated in all their political enterprises. With Surendranath as his mentor and his own organisational ability, Ananda Mohan set up a number of pioneering institutions. The Calcutta Students Association was the earliest attempt made to organise students for constructive political work. The Indian Association was the first political organisation at the all-India level to institute a vigorous constitutional agitation for the rights and privileges of the Indian citizens. One of its by-products was the convening of the, first National Conference in 1883 which became a precursor of the Indian National Congress (1885).

Ananda Mohan was associated with the Congress since its inauguration and was elected President of its Madras Session in 1898.

As a social reformer, his services for the uplift of women and the illiterate masses, his crusade against social vices and the work he did to promote temperance are still remembered with gratitude. Under his enlightened direction, the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, of which he was a joint founder (1878) became not only a church and a congregation but also an active centre for the spread of education and social uplift.

Although a moderate and a constitutionalist in his political outlook Ananda Mohan was a man of progressive outlook and was one of the earliest to have pleaded for large scale technical education and industrialization.

He is remembered in particular for the last speech that he made on October 16, 1905 at a public meeting organised in Calcutta

to protest against the partition of Bengal. What he said then might sound almost ironically pathetic in the context of what happened in 1947 when the Province of Bengal was sundered once again 'by an official fiat'. Carried practically from his sickbed to preside over the foundation of the Federation Hall, Ananda Mohan described the meeting as a 4 great and historic occasion, which will live in the annals of Bengal, and mark an epoch in its history'. He added: '... this Federation Hall, the foundation stone of which is being laid to-day, not only on this spot of land but on our moistened and tearful hearts, is the visible symbol of this spirit of union, the memorial to future generations yet unborn of this unhappy day and of the unhappy policy which has attempted to separate us into two parts'.

Shortly after this crowning act of his career, he passed away in Calcutta on August 20, 1906 at the somewhat premature age of 59.

I will tell you what they have done. They have dared to think for themselves; and not only for themselves, but for millions of poor ignorant people who compose our Indian Empire. They have been content to sacrifice their own interests and to brave the displeasure of Government in order to lend a helping hand to those poor people.

From the Presidential Address-Ananda Mohan Bose

I.N.C. Session, 1898, Madras

ROMESH CHUNDER DUTT (1848-1909)

President-Lucknow, 1899

Romesh Chunder Dutt was born in Calcutta on August 13, 1848, into a family already famous for academic and literary attainments. Romesh Dutt had his early education in Bengali schools in Calcutta and in the districts. He passed the First Arts examination of the University of Calcutta from the Presidency College in 1866, standing second in order of merit and winning a scholarship. While still a student in the B.A. class, he left for England in 1868 and qualified for the Indian Civil Service.

Dutt began in 1871 an outstanding career in the Indian Civil Service and in Indian public fife. He retired from the Indian Civil

Service in 1897 at the relatively young age of 49 while serving as the Commissioner of Orissa. His work as a civil servant evoked praise from all quarters, including Lieutenant Governors and Governors-General. A more fruitful part of his career began after his retirement, when he became free to devote his time fully to public activities and writing. Even when he was in the Civil Service, he earned a reputation as a first-rate orator and as a man who was not afraid to express independent views. His views on the causes of poverty in India or on the problems of administration, including those relating to the controversial Ilbert Bill, were not always in line with official thinking. He became President of the Indian National Congress in 1899 and was regarded by the growing politically-conscious educated public as one of their most effective spokesmen.

Dutt was appointed a Lecturer in Indian History in the University of London shortly after his retirement from the Civil Service. He, however, returned to Indian in 1904 to serve the State of Baroda as Revenue Minister for three years; and he came back to India again in 1908 as a member of the Decentralisation Commission.

His first book on the economic problems of the cultivators was 'Peasantry of Bengal', written in 1875; the ideas developed in this book were expanded fully in 'Famines in India,' published in 1900, containing his strongly-argued thesis about the overassessment of land revenue and containing a plea for the extension of the Permanent Settlement to the Ryotwari area and also for a permanent. fixation of rents payable by the ryots to the intermediaries. His greatest works in the, field followed soon after, with the publication, of 'India under Early British Rule, 1757-1837 in 1901, and the 'Economic History of India in the Victorian Age' in 1902. The thesis on land revenue was reiterated in the famous 'Open Letters', to which Lord Curzon's Government gave an official reply in the Resolution of 1902.

He died at the age of 61 in 1909, when a further period of fruitful work seemed to lie ahead. As a civil servant, as a spokesman of the new generation of educated Indians, as a political leader of the liberal school, as a perceptive student of economic problem, as a scholarly historian and as a creative writer, Romesh Dutt was

all that the rising Indian intelligentsia aspired to be. There are two sides to every question, and it is absolutely necessary for the purposes of good government and of just administration that not only the official view, but the people's view on every question should be represented and heard. There are local bodies in different parts of India which give expression to the people's views on local questions; but this National Congress is the only body in India which seeks to represent the views and aspirations of the people of India as a whole in the large and important, and if I may use the word, Imperial questions of administration. Therefore, this National Congress is doing a service to the Government the value of which cannot be overestimated, and which I feel certain is appreciated by the Government itself.

From the Presidential Address-Romesh Chunder Dutt

I.N.C. Session, 1899, Lucknow

SIR NARAYAN GANESH CHANDAVARKAR (1855-1923)

President-Lahore, 1900

Narayan Ganesh Chandavarkar was born in Honawar in the North Kanara District of the Bombay Presidency on December 2, 1855. Before he took the degree in Law in 1881, he served as a Dakshina Fellow in the Elphinstone College for some time. Shortly before the Indian National Congress was founded in 1885, N. G. Chandavarkar went to England as a member of the three-man delegation, which was sent to educate public opinion about India on the eve of the General Elections in England. After a very successful and prosperous career as a pleader. Chandavarkar was elevated to the bench of the Bombay High Court in 1901. When the new reformed councils under the Act of 1919 came into existence in 1921, Narayan Chandavarkar was nominated as the first non-official President of the Bombay Legislative Council. This post he filled with dignity till the last day of his life. His visit to England in 1885 carved out for Chandavarkar a political career, and he threw himself whole-heartedly into the work of the Indian National Congress which was founded in Bombay in 1885 on December 28, the day on which he and the other delegates returned to India. Fifteen years later, in 1900, he was elected President of the annual session of the Congress held in Lahore.

Soon after he was elected President of the Congress, Chandavarkar was appointed Judge of the Bombay High Court, and then he retired from politics. He re-entered the political field in 1914 after his return from Indore where he had served as Prime Minister. At that time the Congress divided into two camps and, four years later, in 1918, the differences resulted in the foundation of the All-India Moderates Conference of which, along with Surendranath Banerjea and Dinshaw Wacha, Chandavarkar became the leader and guide. In 1920 he presided over the public meeting held in Bombay to protest against the report of the Hunter Committee on the Jallianwala Bagh atrocities which was appointed by the Government of India. After the Chairman's speech, Mahatma Gandhi moved the principal resolution. Later he listened to Chandavarkar's warning and accepted his advice when he called off the Civil Disobedience campaign in 1921.

When Ranade founded the Indian National Social Conference in 1885, Chandavarkar became one of his chief lieutenants. In 1901, when Ranade died, his mantle of the general secretaryship fell on Chandavarkar's shoulders. For two decades he worked to widen the scope of the Conference.

A number of new organisations sprang up in Bombay during the ten or twelve years which followed his temporary retirement from politics in 1901. With every one of these, he was associated as founder-president and as guide and counsellor. The organisation to which Chandavarkar turned for spiritual light and strength was the Prarthana Samaj, of which he was the President for twenty-three years, from 1901 to the last day of his life.

The average English labourer is not known to be more provident than the Indian ryot, who has further, this natural advantage in his favour that he requires less food, fewer necessaries of life by way of clothing. If he spends on marriages more than he ought to, the benefit of such mild extravagance goes to other ryots of his class and goes not without return. What is spent on marriages is mostly in the shape of ornaments-and ornaments serve as a resource to fall back upon in times of distress.

From the Presidential Address-Sir N. G. Chandavarkar

I.N.C. Session, 1900, Lahore

DINSHAW EDUIJI WACHA (1844-1936)

President-Calcutta, 1901

Dinshaw Edulji Wacha was born in Bombay on August 2, 1844 in a middle class Parsi family. He worked in close association with Dadabhai Naoroji and Pherozeshah Mehta in the Congress and was active in both social reform and educational fields and in political activities. He took a keen and active interest in the Bombay Municipality, being its member for forty years. He was a founder-member of the Indian National Congress, functioned as its Secretary for several years and was elected its President in 1901. He was the Secretary of the Bombay Presidency Association for thirty years (1885-1915) before he became its President (1915-18).

Early in life he displayed his grasp of public finance and economic issues. Just as he ranks with Pherozeshah Mehta as the maker of the Bombay Municipal Corporation, so also does he rank with Gopal Krishna Gokhale as the custodian and watchdog of the country's finance. Moderate though he was, he greatly embarrassed the Government by his trenchant criticism of its economic and financial policies. In 1897 he gave "correct and adequate expression" to the national view before the Welby Commission in London, pointing out that the financial embarrassment of the Government of India was caused not by the falling rupee exchange but by the reckless increase in military and civil expenditure.

The positions he held were many and various. He was Knighted in 1917. He was a prolific writer and was foremost educating the people and creating an enlightened public opinion on the political and economic issues that faced the country. His pen was powerful, often trenchant. No economic irregularity, no misuse of finance escaped his hawk-like eye even at an advanced age. He condemned the "homoeopathic dose of Indian participation in legislation provided by the Morley-Minto and Montford Reforms.

A great nationalist economic critic and financial wizard, he was modest, unassuming and unostentatious throughout his long life.

Leaving aside all other countries, let us take the case of England alone. How is it that there at least for half-a-century past there is no such calamity as famine, though the country depends for two-thirds of its food-supply on foreign nations? Is it not the case that it is the vast and most satisfactory improvement in the economic condition of the English labourer and artisan which has banished the sufferings? There might have been any quantity of food-supply from foreign parts; but so long as there was the lack of the necessary means to buy that supply, the food for all intents and purposes might as well be at the bottom of the sea. Now the one phenomenon, above all others, which was discerned on the surface in India in reference to the last famine, was the almost total disability of the masses.

From the Presidential Address-Sir D. E. Wacha

I.N.C. Session, 1901, Calcutta

LALMOHAN GHOSH (1849-1909)

President-Madras, 1903

Lalmohan Ghosh was born in Krishnagar, West Bengal, in 1849. After passing the Entrance examination in the first division Lalmohan left for England in 1869 to qualify as a Barrister-at-law. He joined the Calcutta Bar in 1873.

An active patriot, Lalmohan became a prominent member of the British Indian Association and visited England in 1879 to represent the grievances and demands of Indians to the British public. In July 1880, he served as a member of a committee which pleaded with Lord Harrington for the repeal of the Press Act and the Arms Act and for raising the upper limit of the age of eligibility for candidates competing at the Indian Civil Service examination. Back in India, Lalmohan took up cudgels against the obnoxious Ilbert Bill and castigated with scathing satire the impudent and insulting remarks that one Mr. Branson, a Barrister, had made on Indian women.

In India, Laimohan was always in the front rank of those who worked for a nation in the making. He was elected President of the Madras session (1903) of the Indian National Congress. Lalmohan Ghosh died in Calcutta on October 18, 1909.

Lalmohan Ghosh's social and political ideals were derived largely from the liberal humanism of Victorian England. He firmly believed in the necessity of Western education for Indians as a force to unite the people into one nation. In his Presidential address at the Madras session of the Congress, he pleaded for compulsory primary education in the country. He never thought of a severance of relation between England and India, but he also believed, that it was necessary to acquire, by constitutional means, rights for Indians to the rule (of the British type) of law and justice, to free expression of opinion, to opportunities of trade and service, and no to democratic legislative institutions.

La1mohan Ghosh's particular contribution to the national movement of India was fearless and cogent criticism of the established authority.

We have a sacred duty towards the poorer classes of our people. Those of us who have received the benefits of High Education are bound to do, whatever may be in our power, to extend the blessings of education, so far as may be, to the masses of our people. Let us remember the simple but eloquent words of late Mr. John Bright that the nation in every country dwells in the cottage.

From the Presidential Address-Lalmohan Ghosh

I.N.C. Session, 1903, Madras

SIR HENRY COTTON (1845-1915)

President-Bombay, 1904

Sir Henry Cotton belonged to a distinguished family who served India for five generations. His great grandfather Joseph Cotton joined the East India Company's mercantile service in the middle of the 18th century, and was a Director of the Company for 28 years. Henry's father, Joseph John Cotton, was a Madras Civilian from 1831 to 1863. Henry was born in 1845 at Combaconum in the Tanjore district of Madras.

In October 1867, he came to India to join the Bengal Civil Service. He became the Chief Commissioner of Assam in 1897, from which post he retired in 1902. The purely administrative controversy with the Government of India regarding the

readjustment of the boundaries of Bengal and Assam brought him into prominence and made a leader of him in the Partition agitation which was soon to follow.

He returned to India to preside over the twentieth session of the Indian National Congress at Bombay, in 1904. On January 10, 1905 a conference on the Partition question was held at the Town Hall, Calcutta, under the presidency of Sir Henry Cotton. Sir Henry traced the history of the Partition of Bengal from 1891 when the matter was first discussed till 1897 when he was the Chief Commissioner of Assam. Lushai Hills were then transferred to Assam and the matter was dropped. The proposals of the present partition, in his opinion, were not made either by the Government of Bengal or by the administration of Assam. They had come "spontaneously and uninvitedly from the Government of India itself". Returning to London, he joined the India group in the House of Commons. He had many Indian friends with whom he mixed freely-the Tagore family, W. C. Bonnerjee, R. C. Dutt, Surendranath Banerjea and the Maharaja of Darbhanga.

In 1885 he was appointed a fellow of the Calcutta University and was elected unopposed to the Calcutta Municipal Corporation. About the same time he published his 'New India or India in Transition'. His second work Indian and Home Memories' was published in 1911. Both books reveal his genuine and humane interest in the welfare of India.

The Indian National Congress has thus its own functions, which I take it upon myself to say, as a watchful eye-witness from its birth, it has discharged with exemplary fidelity, judgement and moderation. Yours is a distinguished past. If you have not in any considerable measure succeeded in moulding the policy of Government, you have exercised an immense influence in developing the history of your country and the character of your countrymen. You have become a power in the land, and your voice peals like a trumphet-note from one end of India to the other. Your illustrious leaders have earned a niche in the Temple of Fame, and their memory will be cherished by a grateful posterity.

From the Presidential Address-Sir Henry Cotton

I.N.C. Session, 1904, Bombay

GOPAL KRISHNA GOKHALE (1866-1915)

President-Benares, 1905

Gopal Krishna Gokhale was born on May 9, 1866 at Katulk in Ratnagiri. The economic condition of the family was so bad that on his father's death, he could continue his studies only because his elder brother sacrificed his own education. He took his B.A. degree in 1884 and joined the Law College in Bombay, but could not complete the course.

Gokhale was greatly influenced by Ranade, whom he regarded as his master in political and public life, Dadabhai Naoroji, who was his hero, and Pherozeshah Mehta. Immediately after his graduation, Gokhale joined the Deccan Education Society, Poona, as a Life Member. When the Fergusson College was opened in 1885, he was called upon to lecture there. He retired in 1902 specifically to devote himself to public life. In 1889 he became a member of the Indian National Congress. In 1890 he was elected Honorary Secretary of the Sarvajanik Sabha, Poona, of which Ranade was the most influential member. In 1893 he became the Secretary of the Bombay Provincial Conference. In 1895 he became Joint Secretary of the Indian National Congress along with Tilak.

In 1905 Gokhale founded the Servants of India Society with the object of training men to devote themselves to the service of India as national missionaries and to promote by all constitutional means the national interests of the Indian people. In 1908 he founded the Ranade Institute of Economics.

He was a front rank Reformer; he deprecated the caste-system and untouchability, pleaded for the emancipation of women and championed the cause of female education. In Gokhale's opinion, the introduction of Western education in India, with its liberalising influence, was a great blessing to the people. He was a firm believer in the theory that mass education was a prerequisite to national political consciousness. He advocated that primary education should be free in all schools throughout India at once.

As for Gokhale's ideas on nationalism and the conduct of the nationalist movement. he sought greater autonomy for Indians who would cooperate with the Government in reforms and obtain through constitutional means and by persuasion and advance

over the reforms granted until, finally, India became a self-governing Dominion within the British Commonwealth of Nations. While appreciating the benefits of British rule in general, he never failed to criticize unjust policies and high-handed actions of the Government.

In his opinion, the economic results of British rule in India were absolutely disastrous, resulting in frightful poverty. According to him, the greatest need of the hour in India was industrial education. In agriculture, he pleaded that old methods should be changed as much as possible. There was a crying need to introduce agricultural science and improved agricultural implements. Regarding the textile industry, Gokhale acknowledged that the handloom was doing good work and had some future before it, yet the main work would have to be done by machinery. He made extensive use of the public platform for communicating his ideas on social, economic and political reform. Some of his memorable speeches were made in the Imperial Legislative Council, specially on the Annual Budgets from 1902 to 1908.

Gokhale paid frequent visit to England His first visit (1897) was in connection with the Welby Commission. His evidence was noted for his analysis of the leading facts in the history of Indian Finance, his examination of the constitution and expenditure of the Indian Army and his emphasis on the subordination of the interests of the taxpayers to those of the European services and the exclusion of Indians from the higher branches of public service.

Among the early figures in the Indian National Congress Gokhale's position was very high. He was feared by the Government and respected by the people. In politics he belonged to the moderate group opposed to the extremist school led by Tilak. He, however, placed equal emphasis on social reform as on political progress. For nearly three decades Gokhale dedicated his rare qualities to the exclusive service of his country and his people in a way which few could lay claim to. -N. R. Phatak

Twenty long years have since elapsed and during the time much has happened to chill that hope and dim that faith, but there can be no doubt that work of great value in our national life has already been accomplished. The minds of the people have been familiarized with the idea of a united India working for her

salvation; a national public opinion has been created; close bonds of sympathy now knit together the different Provinces; caste and creed separations hamper less and less the pursuit of common aim; the dignity of a consciousness of national existence has spread over the whole land.

From the Presidential Address-G. K. Gokhale

I.N.C. Session, 1905, Benares

RASHBIHARI GHOSH (1845-1921)

President-Surat, 1907; Madras, 1908

Rashbihari Ghosh was born on December 23, 1845 in Burdwan, West Bengal. After a short spell in the local pathshala, Rashbihari was educated in the Burdwan Raj Collegiate School. Passing the entrance examination from Bankura, he entered the Presidency College, Calcutta. He obtained a first class in the M.A. examination in English. In 1871 he passed with honours the Law examination and in 1884 was awarded the degree of Doctor of Laws.

Rashbihari was closely associated with the Calcutta University. From 1887 to 1899 he was a member of the Syndicate. Gokhale's scheme of compulsory primary education received his warm support and during the Swadeshi movement he supported the move for national education, becoming the first President of the National Council of Education (1906.21).

He did not associate himself publicly with the Indian National Congress until 1906. His first important appearance in politics was in 1905 when he presided over a meeting held in the Calcutta Town Hall to protest against the offensive remarks of Lord Curzon at the Convocation ceremony of the Calcutta University. In 1906 he was the Chairman of the Reception Committee when the Congress held its annual session in Calcutta. Next year he presided over the Surat session which ended in pandemonium. In 1908 be, presided over the Madras session.

A moderate in politics, he took a prominent part in the Swadeshi movement which he considered to be based on "love of our own country, not on hatred of the foreigner". To him it meant "the development of India for Indians". This object he

wanted to achieve through constitutional agitation and denounced the extremists as "impatient idealists". The national movements of other countries also interested him. He was greatly influenced by Gokhale's political ideas. He looked upon the British rule in India as a blessing and had great faith in Britain.

I can never think," he observed, "that England will ever retrace her steps or forget her duty to India.... She came not as a conqueror but as a deliverer with the ready acquiescence of the people, to heal and settle, to substitute order and good government for disorder and anarchy.... That task has now been accomplished... and it only remains for England now to fit us gradually for that autonomy which she has granted to her colonies."

A stout defender of the economic, interests of India, he looked upon the Swadeshi movement as a means of fostering indigenous industries which the British Government, following free trade principles, had failed to protect by tariff. He thought that the Government of India should be the "motive force in the industrial development of the country". He himself financed one 'Bandemataram. Match Factory'.

Although not a habitual public speaker, he was an accomplished orator. He addressed the annual sessions of the Indian National Congress and also spoke on other important occasions. -D. P. Sinha

We are now on the threshold of a new era An important chapter has been opened in the history of the relations between Great Britain and India-a chapter of constitutional reform which promises to unite the two countries together in closer bonds than ever. A fair share in the government of our own country has now been given to us. The problem of reconciling order with progress, efficient administration with the satisfaction of aspirations encouraged by our rulers themselves, which timid people thought was insoluble has at last been solved. The people of India will now be associated with the Government in the daily and hourly administration of their affairs.

From the Presidential Address-Rashbihari Ghosh

I.N.C. Session, 1908, Madras

PANDIT MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA (1861-1946)

President-Lahore, 1909; Delhi, 1918; Delhi, 1932; Calcutta, 1933

Madan Mohan Malaviya was born in Allahabad on December 25, 1861. His ancestors were poor but had a social status and were known for their Sanskrit scholarship. Madan Mohan's education began at the age of five when he was sent to Pandit Hardeva's Dharma Gyanopadesh Pathshala. Mohan who was a diligent boy, matriculated in 1879 and joined the Muir Central College and finally graduated from the Calcutta University in 1884. He was appointed as a teacher in his old school on forty rupees a month and soon became popular among his pupils. As there were no rules in those days preventing government servants from attending political meetings he attended the second Congress session held in Calcutta in 1886 and delivered a speech which held the audience spell-bound. A. 0. Hume the General Secretary of the Congress made a very appreciative reference to it in his annual report. Soon after his return from Calcutta he was offered the editorship of the Hindi weekly, the Hindustan. He also edited another weekly, the Indian Union. Malaviya wanted to devote himself entirely to the service of the country. The legal profession did not attract him though he studied law and passed the LL.B. examination in 1891.

With few exceptions Malaviya regularly attended the annual Congress sessions from 1886 to 1936. In 1887, he invited the Congress to Allahabad. During the session great enthusiasm prevailed among the delegates and its success was phenomenal. Malaviya was the Secretary of the Committee. He invited the Congress to Allahabad again in 1892, and again its success was largely due to his devoted efforts. In the Congress sessions he spoke generally on the political subjection of the country, the poverty of the masses owing to the British economic policy and the monopoly of the higher posts by officers recruited in England. On account of his services to the Congress he was elected its President in 1909,1918,1932 and 1933, but owing to his arrest by the Government of India, he could not beside over the 1932 and 1933 sessions which had been banned. Perhaps, he tried to popularise the national cause more than many other leaders.

Although he was a strong supporter of the Congress he founded the Hindu Mahasabha in 1906. It was established,

according to its supporters, to oppose not the just claims of the Muslim community but the "divide and rule" policy of the British Government. Malviya became a High Court Vakil in 1893. He always gave preference to public work over his legal work. He virtually withdrew from the legal profession in 1909 but he made an exception in 1922 in regard to the appeal of 225 persons condemned to death in connection with the Chauri Chaura riots (Gorakhpur District, U.P.) on account of which Mahatma Gandhi suspended the civil disobedience movement, and saved 153 accused from the gallows.

Malaviya's zeal for public work made him realise the necessity of starting newspapers particularly in Hindi, for the education of the public. He started the Abhyudaya as a Hindi weekly in 1907 and made it a daily in 1915. He also started the Maryada a Hindi monthly in 1910 and another Hindi monthly, in 1921. He started the Leader, an English daily in October 1909. He was the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Hindustan Times from 1924 to 1946.

In consequence of the active work that he did as Senior Vice-Chairman of the Allahabad Municipality, he was elected to the Provincial Legislative Council in 1902. The ability and independence which marked his speeches in the Council led to his election in 1909 to the Imperial Legislative Council, of which he soon became one of the most important members. He participated in the debates on important resolutions, e.g. those relating to free and compulsory primary education, the prohibition of recruitment of Indian indentured labour to the British colonies, nationalisation of railways, etc. He took a keen interest in the industrial development of the country and was therefore appointed a member of the Indian Industrial Commission in 1916.

In view of the non-cooperation movement started by Mahatma Gandhi in 1920, he did not seek election to the Indian Legislative Assembly in 1921. But he was a member of the Assembly from 1924 to April 1930. He resigned shortly after the salt satyagraha started by Mahatma Gandhi and took part in it. He supported the demand for the grant of full Dominion Status to India put forward by Pandit Motilal Nehru. He was invited to the Round Table Conference in 1931, but he inevitably returned dissatisfied with

the attitude of the British Government. The Benares Hindu University betrays the keen interest that he took in the education of the mind and the spirit. The importance that he attached to the economic development of the country made him combine the teaching of science and technology with that of religion.

Malaviya was a conservative in social matters. He believed in the 'Varnashrama Dharma' (caste system). He was, however, prepared to adjust himself to social changes in the country to a limited extent, but wanted to take the leaders of the Hindu community and the Benares pandits with him in matters of social reform. He felt strongly the injustice done to the depressed classes in connection with temple entry and pleaded their cause before the pandits in 1936. He also favoured the raising of the position of Hindu women.

He occupied a very high position in Indian public life and his public activities were numerous. The freedom struggle, the economic development of the country, promotion of indigenous industries, education, religion, social service, the development of Hindi and other matters of national importance continued to occupy his attention as long as he lived. He was the President of the All India Seva Samity from 1914 till 1946. He was known for his gentleness and humility but he did not yield where principles were concerned. He had the courage to differ more than once from the Mahatma even at the risk of becoming unpopular. He opposed, for example, the boycott of schools and colleges, the burning of foreign cloth and the boycott of the visit of the Prince of Wales in 1921. It will be true to say that he considered responsive co-operation a better policy than civil disobidence.

I appeal to my countrymen to wake up to the reality of the situation. I take it that every Indian wants that we should have complete freedom for the management of our own affairs. The attainment of this freedom will become easier if we unite and work with one mind and purpose to achieve it. I implore all Hindus and Musalmans, Sikhs, Christians and Parsees and all other countrymen to sink all communal differences and to establish political unity among all sections of the people.

In the midst of much darkness, I see a clear vision that the clouds which have long been hanging over our heads are lifting.

Let every son and daughter do his or her duty to expedite the advent of the drawn of the day of freedom and happiness. Truth is on our side. Justice is with us. God will help us. We are sure to win. "Vande Mataram".

From the Presidential Address-Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya

I.N.C. Session, 1933, Calcutta.

PANDIT BISHAN NARAYAN DAR (1864-1916)

President-Calcutta, 1911

Pandit Bishan Narayan Dar, one of the most prominent nationalist leaden in the early phase of the Indian National Congress, was born at Barabanki (U.P.) in 1864. He started his education in the traditional way of North Indian aristocracy, with Urdu and Persian. He had his College education at Lucknow. Then he went to England where he studied Law and was called to the Bar. On his return in 1887 he started his practice as a barrister in Oudh. His interest in public affairs and the welfare of his country, however, did not allow him to remain content with a successful professional career. He was drawn into politics in 1892 and remained a most active figure in the national movement till his death in 1916.

It was in 1892 that Bishan Narayan Dar first attended the Indian National Congress, and from that time on he was a regular participant in the Congress sessions. He was one of the most eloquent speakers at the Congress. In 1911 he presided over the Calcutta Session of the Congress and his Presidential address was one of the best in the history of the Congress.

He was also a prominent figure in the U.P. Political Conference. As a member of the Imperial Legislative Council for several years in the beginning of the 20th century, he boldly advocated the nationalist cause and criticised governmental policies and measures.

His political ideas were best reflected in the speeches he delivered at the Congress sessions and in the Imperial Legislative Council, and also in his numerous writings. Speaking of the reform of the Legislative Councils at the 1890 session of the Congress, he opposed the idea of special minority representation. "The

Legislative Council is a body where national interests ought to be represented and where all sectarian interests and class bias should be excluded. The object of a National Assembly is only to discuss those matters which are common to the whole Indian Nation. On principle, therefore, I object to any clause for the representation of minorities".

Again in his Presidential address at the 1911 session of the Congress, he said, "Sectarian political organisations are always objectionable, and nowhere more so than in India, where racial, religious and social prejudices are apt to enter into their composition and pervert the real aim for which they are started".

Like other nationalists of his day, Bishan Narayan Dar had also faith in the British sense of justice. But at the same time he was a vehement critic of governmental policies and measures. He was in favour of the Indianisation of the bureaucracy, and wanted simultaneous Civil Service examinations in England and India.

In 1893 when the cow-killing riots took place in Azaimgarh (U.P.) which led to a wholesale persecution of the Hindus, Bishan, Narayan Dar took up the cause of the persecuted Hindus and fought on their behalf in the law courts and in the press. In this Azamgarh pamphlet he criticised the Government officials in their dealing with the situation. It created a sensation all over the country.

He was a prolific writer. His article in the Leader, entitled 'Present Political Situation', published in March 1910, provoked the Government to take action against the editor and the publisher.

Bishan Narayan Dar held very liberal views on religion and social reforms. The Kashmiri Pandit community had declared him an outcast for going to England and demanded a Prayaschit on his return in 1887. He boldly refused, and ultimately succeeded in breaking the old Dharma Sabha and in forming, with the help of the progressive elements, a new organisation which came to be known as Bishan Sabha.

So far as it rests with Indians to discharge that great duty, it is done by the Congress by its humble but earnest endeavours. For the last 26 years it has been telling the people what they owe to the British Government, and the British Government what it

might do to make its rule even more beneficent than it is. But by a strange perversity of fate this organisation-national in its composition and loyal and patriotic in its aims-has been maligned, misrepresented, abused and ridiculed.

From the Presidential Address-Bishan Narayan Dar

I.N.C. Session, 1911, Calcutta.

RAO BAHADUR RAGHUNATH NARASINHA MUDHOLKAR (1857-1921)

President-Bankipur, 1912

Raghunath Mudholkar was born in Dhulia, Khandesh, in a respectable middle class family on May 16, 1857. He had his education partly at Dhulia and partly in Vidarbha. Then he went to Bombay and graduated from Elphinstone College where he was granted a Fellowship.

He was a devout Hindu, advocated social reforms like female education, widow remarriage and removal of Untouchability. As a follower of Gokhale, he believed that developing nationalism required British cooperation and therefore the national movement should be constitutional and nonviolent. He was in the Congress from 1888 to 1917, and thereafter joined the Liberals. He was in the Congress delegation of 1890 sent to England to voice the grievances of the Indians. He was President of the Indian National Congress held at Bankipur in 1912.

He admired Parliamentary democracy but opposed British bureaucracy. He criticised the economic policy of the Government, helped to establish a number of industries in Vidarbha and advocated technical education. He founded several social organisations and worked for the uplift of the poor. He died on January 13, 1921.

It is certain that in the course of time, the just demands of Indians for a large share in the Government of the country will have to be satisfied, and the question will be how this devolution of power can be conceded.

From the Presidential Address-Rao Bahadur R. N. Mudholkar

I.N.C. Session, 1912, Bankipur.

NAWAB SYED MUHAMMAD BAHADUR (?-1919)

President-Karachi, 1913

Nawab Syed Muhammad was the son of Mir Humayun Bahadur, one of the wealthiest Muslims of South India. Humayun Bahadur was a sincere nationalist-minded Muslim who helped the Indian National Congress in its early stages, by giving both financial and intellectual support. When the third Indian National Congress was held in 1887, Mr. Humayun Bahadur gave monetary help to the Congress leaders. On his mother's side Nawab Syed Muhammad was descended from the famous Tipu Sultan of Mysore. He was the grandson of Shahzadi Shah Rukh Begum, daughter of Sultan Yasin, the fourth son of Tipu Sultan.

The date of his birth is not known from any reliable source; according to the Hindu he died on February 12, 1919. His active political life centred round the two cities of Madras and Delhi. He lived at a time when the Muslim League did not become a militant organisation demanding exclusive privileges. He was not a member of the Muslim League since he was a nationalist in his outlook.

He had very liberal views on education, both general and technical. He seems to have been much pained on seeing the colossal illiteracy of the Indians in the beginning of the twentieth century. He maintained that the main duty of the State was to educate its people by setting up free primary schools. He believed that the stability of a State and the loyalty of the citizens to the State, the two pillars of social equilibrium must be erected on an educated social base. But he also maintained that the Government must pay more attention to technical education which would promote industrial development and economic welfare of the people.

He joined the Indian National Congress in 1894 and became an active member of the organisation. In all his speeches and addresses Syed Muhammad convincingly maintained that the Muslims and the Hindus must live like brothers and their different religions must not separate them but bind them together. He sincerely believed that the main aim of the Indian National Congress was to unite the peoples of India into a strong nation.

In politics Syed Muhammad may be regarded as a moderate, following the great leader Gopal Krishna Gokhale. He did not believe in revolutionary activities and his goal of political freedom was not separation from the British Empire. He was an admirer of the British sense of justice and fairplay. Therefore, Self-Government within the British Empire was the ultimate aim of the early Indian leaders and Syed Muhammad was one among them. He was much agitated by the racial discrimination and denial of equality to the Indians in South Africa. He was also a severe critic of the British Government for the dismemberment of the Turkish Empire after the First World War. He maintained that all the Indian Muslims must join together and save the Turkish Empire and the Khilafat from disintegration.

A believer in social uplift of the masses, he was the President of the Madras Mahajana Sabha from 1903, and his nationalist views were rewarded by election to the Presidency of the Indian National Congress in 1913. He was the first Muslim Sheriff of Madras and was appointed as such in 1896. He was nominated to the Madras Legislative Council, in 1900 and to the Imperial Legislative Council in 1905. Syed Muhammad was awarded the title of Nawab in 1897 by the British Government when he attended the Diamond Jubilee Celebration of Queen Victoria.

The reluctance to revive the old village organisation and to establish village panchayats is particularly pronounced in some Provinces, while a degree of tardiness in considering proposals for the expansion of local and municipal administration coupled with the oft-repeated desire to hedge further advance with over-cautious restriction, is noticeable among all grades of administrative authorities in India.

From the Presidential Addess-Nawab Syed Muhammad Bahadur

I.N.C. Session, 1913, Karachi.

BHUPENDRA NATH BOSE (1859-1924)

President-Madras, 1914

Bhupendra Nath Bose was born at Krishnagar (Bengal) in 1859. His father was a clerk in a local zamindar's estate. This Kayastha family earned little and lived simply. Bhupendra Nath obtained his first degree from the Presidency College in Calcutta in 1880.

Then he took the Master's in 1881, followed by the Bachelor of Law degree in 1883. He was also a scholar in Persian and Sanskrit. In 1907 he went to England as a delegate pleading for the annulment of the Partition decree. Ten years later, in 1917, he went to England nominated as a member of the Council of the Secretary of State for India. In 1922 he represented the Indian Government at the Labour Conference in Geneva. His political compatriots were men like Surendranath Banerjea, Bipin Chandra Pal, Abdul Rasul and Bal Gangadhar Tilak.

He was a member of the Bengal Legislature for six years, from 1904 to 1910. During those years he also worked for the nationalist movement. In 1905 he presided over the Bengal Provincial Conference held at Mymensingh, joined the anti-partition agitation and toured throughout Bengal calling for a boycott of British goods.

In 1910 he opposed the passing of the Press Act. In 1914 he was the President of the Indian National Congress at Madras. As the nationalists moved towards extremism. Bhupendra Nath moved away and closer to the Government. In 1917 he became a member and under-secretary in the Council of the Secretary of State for India. He remained in that position till 1923 when he was made a member of the Executive Council of the Governor of Bengal. When he died in 1924, he was working as the Vice-Chancellor of' the Calcutta University.

Bhupendra Nath was closely associated with education and politics in Bengal. He was an active worker in the National Council of Education. In his earlier years he was also connected with the Calcutta Corporation as a Municipal Commissioner. His standing in Bengal politics was fairly high. He ranked next to Surendranath Banerjea as a moderate leader.

He supported the Age of Consent Bill 1891. He was in favour of western education. Above all, Bhupendra Nath was a nationalist and wanted self-government for India. He fought the Government but from within and not outside.

India wants a higher life, a wider sphere of activity and usefulness. India wants that her Government should be consistent with her growing self-respect and intellectuality.

From the Presidential Address-Bhupendra Nath Bose

I.N.C. Session, 1914, Madras.

LORD SATYENDRA PRASANNA SINHA (1863-1928)

President-Bombay, 1915

Satyendra Prasanna was born at Raipur in March 1863. His father was a rich and aristocratic Kayastha. After Lincoln's Inn he was called to the Bar in 1886 and returned to Calcutta. While there he acquired a large practice and in 1903 became the Standing Counsel of the Government of India, overriding the claims of an English Barrister. He was the first Indian to become the Advocate-General of Bengal (1905), also the first Indian to enter the Governor General's Executive Council (1909) which for so long had been the preserve of Englishmen. This, however, meant a great financial loss to him. Due to a difference of opinion with the Government over the Press Bill he tendered his resignation but later withdrew it on request. He returned to the Bar in 1910.

Satyendra was a liberal in outlook. Due to the influence perhaps of the Tagore family, he became a supporter of the Brahmo Samaj. A moderate in politics, he was a firm believer in constitutional methods. To him, India's political goal was "autonomy within the Empire, which should be reached not by any sudden or revolutionary change, but by a gradual evolution and cautious progress." Satyendra was an active member of the Indian National Congress from 1896 to 1919 when along with other moderates he left the organisation. At the Calcutta session of the Congress in 1896 he brought forward a proposal that no ruler of any Indian State should be deposed without an open judicial trial.

In 1915 he was elected to preside over the Bombay session of the Congress. As President, he delivered a closely reasoned address demanding an authoritative statement from the British Government regarding the British policy towards India and this led to the historic announcement of Edvin Montagu the Secretary of State for India, on August 20, 1917. In 1919 he was raised to

the peerage as Baron Sinha of Raipur and was entrusted with piloting the Government of India Bill (1919) through the House of Lords. He was appointed Under-Secretary of State for India in the same year. In both these capacities he was the first and only Indian to attain such distinctions. In 1920 he returned to India to take up the Governorship of the Province of Bihar and Orissa. He held this position only for a short while and in 1921 was compelled to retire on grounds of health.

Satyendra Prasanna was the recipient of many honours. He was Knighted in 1914. He was perfect synthesis of the East and West and possessed a modesty which no success could spoil.

Let us argue out for ourselves freely and frankly the various ways by which we can obtain the priceless treasure of self-government. It seems to me that it is possible only in one of the three following ways:

First, by way of a free gift from the British nation.

Second, by wresting it from them.

Third, by means of such progressive improvement in our mental, moral and material condition as will, on the one hand, render us worthy of it and, on the other, impossible for our rulers to withhold it.

From the Presidential Address-Lord Satyendra Prasanna Sinha

I.N.C. Session, 1915, Bombay.

AMBICA CHARAN MAZUMDAR (1850-1922)

President-Lucknow, 1916

Ambica Charan Mazumdar was born at Sandiya, Faridpur district in East Bengal, in 1850. His father, Radha Madhab Mazumdar, was a zamindar and thus Ambica Charan Mazumdar had a rich aristocratic background. While studying in Calcutta he met Surendranath Banerjea in 1875 at the Metropolitan Institute and became interested in politics.

In 1886 he attended the second session of the Indian National Congress held in Calcutta. But it was from 1899 that he became one of the leaders of Bengal in the Nationalist Movement, when he presided over the Bengal Provincial Conference at Burdwan.

In 1905 Ambica Charan Mazumdar plunged into the partition agitation along with Aswini Kumar Datta, Bhupendra Nath Basu and Surendranath Banerjea and organised meetings, protesting against the partition of Bengal, Lord Curzon and Sir Bampfylde Fuller.

In 1908 at the Madras Session of the Indian National Congress, he welcomed the long-expected reform scheme. In 1910, he again presided over the Bengal Provincial Conference held in Calcutta. In 1915 he published a book, 'Indian National Evolution', which was a brief survey of the origin and progress of the Indian National Congress In 1916, as a culmination of his political career, he became the President of the 31st Session of the Indian National Congress in Lucknow and in his presidential speech stated: "Call it Home Rule, call it selfrule, call it Swaraj... it is representative government." He retired from active politics in 1918 after helping to form the Liberal Federation.

A close friend of Gokhale and Sir Henry Cotton, a follower of constitutional means in the nationalist movement, Ambica Charan remained a moderate in his political views to the end. He was one of the great leaders of Bengal in the Nationalist Movement. Sir John Woodburn, Lt.-Governor of Bengal, called him "The Grand Old Man of Faridpur". An orator and a lawyer, he was one of the stoutest advocates of constitutional development of India.

Here are our demands which, God willing, are bound to be fulfilled at no distant date.

India must cease to be a dependency and be raised to the status of a self-governing state as an equal partner with equal rights and responsibilities as an independent unit of the Empire.

In any scheme of readjustment after the war, India should have a fair representation in the Federal Council like the colonies of the Empire.

India must be governed from Delhi and Simla, and not from Whitehall or Downing Street. The Council of the Secretary of State should be either abolished or its constitution so modified as to admit of substantial Indian representation on it. Of the two Under-Secretaries of State for India one should be an Indian and the salaries of the Secretary of State should be placed on the British

estimates as in the case of the Secretary for the Colonies. The Secretary of State for India should, however, have no more powers over the Government of India than those exercised by the Secretary of State for the Colonies in the case of the Dominions. India must have complete autonomy, financial, legislative as well as administrative.

The Government of India is the most vital point in the proposed reforms. It is the fountain head of all local administrations and unless we can ensure its progressive character any effective reform of the local Governments would be impossible. For this the services must be completely separated from the State and no member of any service should be a member of Government.

From the Presidential Address-Ambica Charan Mazumdar

I.N.C. Session, 1916, Lucknow

DR ANNIE BESANT (1847-1933)

President-Calcutta, 1917

Annie Besant was born in London on October 1, 1847. Her father William Page Woods was half-Irish and half-English, and belonged to a distinguished family, one of his ancestors having been the Mayor of London and another a Lord Chancellor.

She was instrumental in helping to start the first trade unions in London. She joined the Fabian Society and was a close associate of Sydney Webbs, George Bernard Shaw, George Lansbury, Ramsay MacDonald and several other prominent socialists of the time.

In 1866 she read two theosophical books written by Mr. A. P. Sinnet a prominent theosophist and in 1889 she was given Mme H. P. Blavatsky's "The Secret Doctrine" for review. This book was to her a revelation. She joined the Theosophical Society in May 1889 and became Mme Blavatsky's devoted pupil and helper. She became a prominent worker in the Society and was elected President which position she held till her death on September 21, 1933.

She first came to India on November 16, 1893. In October 1913 she spoke at a great public meeting in Madras recommending that there should be a Standing Committee of the House of Commons

for Indian affairs which would go into the question of how India might attain freedom. She founded a weekly newspaper Commonweal in January 1914 for her political work. In June 1914 she purchased the Madras Standard and renamed it New India, which, thereafter, became her chosen organ for her tempestuous propaganda for India's freedom. She called this freedom "Home Rule" for India. She was a delegate to the Indian National Congress in 1914. In 1915, in Bombay, at a meeting called by her, she explained her plan for the establishment of the Home Rule League. In 1916 this work intensified.

People eagerly read the New India for news of the progress of the movement and read Dr. Besant's editorials in the paper. The Home Rule League was started on September 1, 1916. She failed in her first effort to persuade Tilak to combine their two movements. In June 1917, with G. S. Arundale and B. P. Wadia, two of her principal workers, she was interned at Ootacamund. Because of the wide protest all over India and abroad, the internment order was withdrawn, and in August 1917 she was made the President of the Calcutta Session of the Indian National Congress.

As a result of her campaign and because of the pressure of public opinion in India, the Montagu-Chelmsford proposals were enacted by the British Parliament. In 1920 Gandhiji launched his campaign of Satyagraha, and at the Congress of 1920 in Lahore Annie Besant with five others stood against the overwhelming flood of support in favour of Gandhiji's plan. A whole lifetime of fighting by constitutional means and within the law left her with a deep distrust of massive law-breaking in whatever cause it might be.

For holding these views, her popularity swiftly waned. However, her creative work for India went on. Between 1922 and 1924, in consultation with such colleagues as Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Sir C. P. Ramaswarni Aiyar, Sir P. S. Sivaswami Aiyar, Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, Sir Purshottamdas Thakurdas, Sir Hari Singh Gour and others, she drafted the Commonwealth of India Bill which was presented in Parliament by Mr. George Lansbury in December 1925. But it did not go beyond the first reading stage. In 1917 she started the Women's Indian Association to which she gave her powerful support.

In 1924 the Association had 51 branches. In 1927 the first All India Women's Conference was held in Poona and it became a permanent and powerful body.

She was in the forefront of all constructive work done during the forty years of her active service in India.

The argument that Democracy is foreign to India cannot be alleged by any well informed person. Maine and other historians recognise the fact that Democratic Institutions are essentially Aryan, and spread from India to Europe with the immigration of Aryan peoples. Panchayats, the "village republics," had been the most stable institution of India, and only vanished during the last century under the pressure of the East India Company's domination.

From the Presidential Address-Dr. Annie Besant.

I.N.C. Session, 1917, Calcutta.

SYED HASAN IMAM (1871-1933)

President-Bombay, 1918 (Special Session)

Hasan Imam, son of lmdad Imam, and younger brother of Sir Ali Imam, was born at Neora, District Patna, on August 31, 1871. A Shia Muslim by faith, he belonged to a distinguished, educated middle class family. After a course of schooling, interrupted frequently by ill-health, he left for England in July 1889 and joined the Middle Temple.

While there he campaigned actively for Dadabhai Naoroji during the General Election of England in 1891. He was called to the Bar in 1892; he returned home the same year and started practice in the Calcutta High Court. Hasan Imam was a Judge of the Calcutta High Court. On the establishment of the Patna High Court in March 1916, Imam resigned the Judgeship of the Calcutta High Court and started practice at Patna. In 1921 he was nominated a Member of the Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council.

From 1908 onwards he took part in political affairs. In October 1909 he was elected President of the Bihar Congress Committee and in the next month he presided over the fourth session of the Bihar Students' Conference. He resumed political activity on a

larger scale after resigning the Judgeship in 1916. Hasan Imam was one of the prominent Indian leaders who called upon Montagu, the Secretary of State for India, in November 1917 and was listed by him among "the real giants of the Indian Political World".

He presided over the special session of the Indian National Congress held at Bombay, 1918, to consider the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms Scheme. It was an important, but difficult, session to handle because opinion was sharply divided on the merits of the scheme. Hasan Imam played a moderating role. A staunch constitutionalist he was opposed to the ideology of the Non-Cooperation Movement.

Hasan Imam took a leading part in the Khilafat Movement. He joined the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1930 and was elected Secretary of the Swadeshi League formed in Patna. He actively campaigned for the boycott of foreign goods and use of Khaddar. Earlier in 1927, he "materially conduced to the success" of the boycott of the Simon Commission in Bihar.

Hasan Imam was a strong advocate of social reforms, particularly the amelioration of the position of women and the depressed classes.

As a member of the Tikari Board of Trustees, he promoted schemes for girls' education. He exposed the economic exploitation of the country, both under the Company and the Imperial rule. He was President of the Board of Trustees of the Beharee, the leading English daily of Bihar; he was also one of the founders of the succeeding Searchlight. He died on April 19, 1933 and lies buried at Japala, District Shahabad.

The traditions that we of the present generation have inherited from those that founded and established this great national organisation are of perseverance in the face of even tremendous opposition, and today it stands acknowledged as the champion of the rights of the Indian people. Those traditions are dear to us and we cherish them. We know no extremists and we know no moderates, names that have been devised by "our enemies" to divide us. We know only one cause and we have only one purpose in view. Our demand is the demand of a United India, and so long as our rights are denied to us we shall continue the struggle!

Unchained in soul-though manacled in limb
Unwarped by prejudice-unawed by wrong,
Friends to the weak and fearless of the strong.

From the Presidential Address-Syed Hasan Imam
I.N.C. Session, 1918, Bombay (Special Session)

PANDIT MOTILAL NEHRU (1861-1931)

President-Amritsar, 1919; Calcutta, 1928

Pandit Motilal Nehru, an eminent lawyer and politician, was born on May 6, 1861. The Nehrus hailed from Kashmir, but had settled in Delhi since the beginning of the eighteenth century. Motilal's grandfather, Lakshmi Narayan, became the first Vakil of the East India Company at the Mughal Court of Delhi. Motilal's father, Gangadhar, was a police officer in Delhi in 1857, when it was engulfed by the Mutiny. When the British troops shelled their way into the town, Gangadhar fled with his wife Jeorani and four children to Agra where he died four years later. Three months after his death Jeorani gave birth to a boy who was named Motilal. Motilal spent his childhood at Khetri in Rajasthan, where his elder brother Nandial became the Diwan. In 1870 Nandlal quit Khetri, qualified as a lawyer and began to practice law at Agra. When the High Court was transferred to Allahabad, be moved with it.

Meanwhile Motilal passed the matriculation examination from Kanpur and joined the Muir Central College at Allahabad. Athletic, fond of outdoor sports, specially wrestling, brimming over with an insatiable curiosity and zest for life, he soon attracted the attention of Principal Harrison and his British colleagues, in the Muir Central College, who took a strong liking to this intelligent, lively and restless Kashmiri youth.

Motilal decided to become a lawyer, topped the list of successful candidates in the Vakil's examination in 1883, set up as a lawyer at Kanpur, but three years later shifted to Allahabad where his brother Nandlal had a lucrative practice at the High Court. Unfortunately, Nandlal died in April 1887 at the age of forty-two, leaving behind five sons and two daughters. Young Motilal found himself, at the age of twenty-five, as the head of a large family, its sole bread-winner.

In 1889 Motilal's wife Swarup Rani gave birth to a son, who was named Jawaharlal. Two daughters, Sarup (later Vijayalakshmi Pandit) and Krishna (later Krishna Hutheesing) were born in 1900 and 1907 respectively. In 1900 Motilal purchased a house at Allahabad, rebuilt it, and named it Anand Bhawan (the abode of happiness). His legal practice was meanwhile growing. A rise in his standard of living was paralleled by a progressive westernization, a process which was accelerated by his visits to Europe in 1899 and 1900. Thorough-going changes, from knives and forks at the dining table to European governesses and tutors for the children, ensued.

In May 1905 Motilal again sailed for Europe, this time with his whole family. He returned in November of the same year after putting Jawaharlal to school at Harrow. From Harrow, Jawaharlal went to Cambridge where he took a Tripos in Natural Science before being called to the Bar in 1912.

Motilal's early incursions into politics were reluctant, brief and sporadic. The list of 1,400 delegates of the Allahabad Congress (1888) includes: "Pandit Motilal, Hindu, Brahmin, Vakil, High Court, N.W.P. (North-Western Provinces)." He attended some of the subsequent sessions of the Congress, but unlike his Allahabad contemporary Madan Mohan Malaviya, he was no more than a passive spectator. It was the tug-of-war between the Moderates and the Extremists in the aftermath of the Partition of Bengal which drew Motilal into the arena and, strangely enough, on the side of the Moderates. In 1907 he presided over a Provincial Conference of the Moderate politicians at Allahabad.

In 1909 he was elected a member of the U.P. Council. He attended the Delhi Durbar in 1911 in honour of the visit of King George V and Queen Mary, became a member of the Allahabad Municipal Board and of the All India Congress Committee. He was elected President of the U.P. Congress. Nevertheless, it was not politics but domestic and professional pre-occupations which were the dominant interest of his life during this period. But from 1912 onwards when JawaharIal returned from England, there were forces at work, both at home and in the country, which were to lead Motilal into the maelstrom of national politics.

The First World War generated deep discontent in several sectors of Indian Society which found a focus in the Home Rule Movement. Motilal had been reluctant to join the Home Rule League, but the internment of Mrs. Besant in June 1917 brought him into the fray. He became the President of the Allahabad branch of the Home Rule League. Now began a perceptible shift in Motilal's politics. In August 1918 he parted company with his Moderate friends on the constitutional issue, and attended the Bombay Congress which demanded radical changes in the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. On February 5, 1919 he launched a new daily paper, the Independent, as a counterblast to the well-established local daily paper, the Leader, which was much too moderate for Motilal's taste in 1919.

The emergence of Mahatma Gandhi on the Indian political stage changed the course of Indian history; it also profoundly influenced the life of Motilal Nehru and his family. The Rowlatt Bills and the publication of the Satyagraha pledge in February 1919 deeply stirred Jawaharlal; he felt an irresistible call to follow the Mahatma. Motilal was not the man to be easily swept off his feet; his legal background predisposed him against any extra-constitutional agitation. It was clear to both father and son that they were at the crossroads. Neither was prepared to give in, but at Motilal's instance Gandhiji intervened and counselled young Nehru to be patient.

Shortly afterwards events marched to a tragic climax in the Punjab; the holocaust of Jallianwala Bagh was followed by Martial Law. Motilal did what he could to bring succour and solace to that unhappy province. He gave his time freely, at the cost of his own legal practice, to the defence of scores of helpless victims of Martial Law, who had been condemned to the gallows or sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.

Elected to preside over the Amritsar Congress (December 1919), Motilal was in the centre of the gathering storm which pulled down many familiar landmarks during the following year. He was the only front rank leader to lend his support to non-cooperation at the special Congress at Calcutta in September 1920. Motilal's fateful decision to cast in his lot with Gandhiji was no doubt influenced by the tragic chain of events in 1919. Apart from

the compulsion of events, there was another vital factor without which he may not have made, in his sixtieth year, a clean break with his past and plunged into the unknown. This was the unshakeable resolve of his son to go the way of Satyagraha.

Immediately after the Calcutta Congress Motilal resigned from the U.P. Council, abandoned his practice at the Bar, curtailed the vast retinue of servants in Anand Bbawan, changed his style of living, consigned cartloads of foreign finery to public bonfires and put on khadi.

In December 1921 both father and son were arrested and sentenced to six months' imprisonment. In February 1922 came the anti-climax, when Gandhiji first announced and then suddenly cancelled mass civil disobedience. In March the Mahatma himself was arrested, tried for sedition and sentenced to six years' imprisonment.

When Motilal came out of gaol in the summer of 1922, he found that the movement had declined, the Congress organisation was distracted by internal squabbles, and the constructive programme could not evoke the enthusiasm of the intelligentsia. Motilal felt that the time had come to revise the programme of non-cooperation so as to permit entry into Legislative Councils. This revision was resisted by those who regarded themselves as the faithful followers of the Mahatma. A long and bitter controversy, which nearly split the Congress, ensued. However, Motilal and C. R. Das founded the Swarajya Party in January 1923, had their way, and contested the elections at the end of 1923. The Swarajya Party was the largest Party in the Central Legislative Assembly as well as in some of the Provincial Legislatures. From 1925 onwards it was recognised by the Congress as its political wing.

The spotlight shifts for the next six years to the Legislative Assembly where Motilal was the leader of the Opposition. With his commanding personality, incisive intellect, great knowledge of law, brilliant advocacy, ready wit and combative spirit, he seemed to be cut out for a Parliamentary role. The Legislative Assembly, however, was no Parliament. It was a hybrid legislature elected on a narrow and communal franchise; it had a solid bloc of official, nominated, European and some Indian members who

took their cue from the irremovable executive. At first Motilal was able to secure sufficient support from the Moderate and the Muslim legislators to outvote the Government. He ruled his own party with an iron hand, but found his task increasingly difficult from 1926 onwards when communal and personal squabbles divided and weakened the Swarajya Party.

Towards the end of 1927, with the appointment of the Simon Commission, there came a political revival. The exclusion of Indians from the Commission united Indian parties in opposition to the Government. An All-Parties Conference was convened by Dr. Ansari, the Congress President, and a Committee, including Tej Bahadur Sapru and headed by Motital, was appointed to determine the principles of a constitution for free India. The report of the Committee-the Nehru Report as it came to be called-attempted a solution of the communal problem which unfortunately failed to receive the support of a vocal section of Muslim opinion led by the Aga Khan and Jinnah.

The Nehru Report, representing as it did the highest common denominator among a number of heterogeneous Parties was based on the assumption that the new Indian Constitution would be based on Dominion Status. This was regarded as a climb-down by a radical wing in the Congress led by Subhash Bose and Motilal's own son who founded the "Independence for India League". The Calcutta Congress (December 1928) over which Motilal presided was the scene of a head-on clash between those who were prepared to accept Dominion Status and those who would have nothing short of complete independence. A split was averted by a via media proposed by Gandhiji, according to which if Britain did not concede Dominion Status within a year, the Congress was to demand complete independence and to fight for it, if necessary, by launching civil disobedience.

The way was thus opened for Gandhiji's return to active politics and for the revival of Satyagraha. Motilal was at first more amused than impressed by Gandhiji's plans for the breach of the salt laws, but as the movement caught on. It found him against the advice of his doctors in the centre of the political arena. He was arrested and imprisoned; but his health gave way and he was released. But there could be no peace for him when most of his

family was in gaol and the whole of India was passing through a baptism of fire. In the last week of January 1931 Gandhiji and the Congress Working Committee were released by the Government as a gesture in that chain of events which was to lead to the Gandhi-lrwin Pact. Motilal had the satisfaction of having his son and Gandhiji beside him in his last days. On February 6, 1931 he passed away.

Motilal had a rational, robust, secular and fearless outlook on life. A brilliant lawyer, an eloquent speaker, a great parliamentarian, and a greater organizer, Motilal was one of the most notable and attractive figures of Indian nationalism in the Gandhian era.

LALA LAJPAT RAI (1865-1928)

President-Calcutta, 1920 (Special Session)

Lala Lajpat Rai, popularly known as "Punjab Kesari", was born on January 28, 1865 in Jagraon tehsil of the Ludhiana district, Punjab, in a Hindu Aggarwal family. His mother, Gulab Devi, came from a Sikh family. Lajpat Rai's family was far from affluent.

Lajpat Rai's interest in politics was aroused by his father who in his early life was a great admirer of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan but whom he condemned later for his anti-Congress tirade. Lajpat Rai too had shared his father's admiration for Sir Syed Ahmed Khan but from 1888 began to criticize in his writings the anti-Congress activities of Sir Syed. Lajpat Rai's father was well-versed in Urdu and Persian, had great respect for Islam, fasted and prayed like a Muslim, but did not embrace Islam largely due to his wife's attachment to the Hindu and Sikh faiths. The Arya Samaj movement, a vital force in the Punjab in the later 19th and early 20th century, had a tremendous appeal for Lajpat Rai (he had met Swami Dayanand at fourteen), who came under its influence from his student days. It was his attachment to the Arya Samaj which led his father also to veer round to Hinduism.

Lajpat Rai's political activity began from 1885 when he joined the Congress session at Allahabad. In the early part of his political career, his interest was confined to social and educational reforms, but his views on politics changed radically as a result of the hasty

and ill-conceived measures thrust on the country by Lord Curzon. He organised big meetings in the Punjab, travelled widely, raised funds for the national cause and exposed the poverty of the people and its causes. He brought out in his writings and speeches lurid comparisons between the economic conditions in India and those in the Western countries, and attacked the economic exploitation by the British as oppressive.

In August-September 1905 Lajpat Rai and Gopal Krishna Gokhale went to England as delegates of the Congress to educate British public opinion on the Indian situation. They won the support of the Labour, Democratic and Socialist parties. At the Benares Congress in December 1905, Lajpat Rai seconded a resolution on the boycott of English cloth in a forceful speech. In 1907 he organised. and led a massive agrarian movement in Punjab, for which he was deported, along with Ajit Singh toBurma under Regulation III of 1818.

During his confinement in Burma. he prepared copious notes which he used later for quotations in his speeches and writings. He gave in his writings, elaborate figures illustrating life-expectancy, death-rate, average income, taxes, wages, illiteracy, and the frequency of famines. When after his release frorn deportation in November 1907, Tilak pressed his claims for the Presidentship of the Congress, Lajpat Rai withdrew voluntarily and bent his energies to save the split in the Congress.

Lajpat Rai went to England in 1908 for the second time, delivered lectures to Indian students and returned to India in 1909. In 1913 he visited Japan, England and the United States on a lecture tour, and returned to India in 1920. During his stay abroad he is believed to have supported, the Ghadar Party's programme. He also established the Indian Home Rule League in the United States on October 15, 1916.

He resumed his political activities on his return to India in 1920. He attended the Calcutta and Nagpur sessions of the Congress in 1920 and also presided over the All India Student's Conference at Nagpur (1920). He was arrested in 1921 while presiding over the Punjab Provincial Political Conference. During his long stay abroad, Lajpat Rai saw India's struggle in a wider perspective against world movements and began to realise how India could

win support from other countries. It was this which inspired him to write his major works: 'Young India', 'England's Debt to India', 'The Political Future of India' and 'Unhappy India'. In collaboration with Hardikar, he remained in close touch with British Labour and Irish organisation He was thinking at one time of writing a book on the application of Bolshevism to Indian conditions.

Lajpat Rai worked passionately for the freedom of India and believed that without no improvement in economic and social conditions was possible. About student's participation in the freedom movement, he once said, "I am not one of those who believe that the students, particularly University students, ought not to meddle in politics. I think it is a most stupid theory".

On his return in 1920 Lajpat Rai was shocked that British repression was even more ruthless than before. He reacted sharply to the Jallianwalla Bagh Massacre.

After the advent of Gandhi, Lajpat Rai found a different world of politics, not really much to his liking, especially when he was called upon to preside over the Special Congress Session in Calcutta in 1920. Gandhi's politics looked to him as that of a visionary. Lajpat Rai was not enthusiastic about the Non-Cooperation Movement and predicted its failure; civil disobedience meant to him merely passive resistance which could never be effective in the conditions then prevailing. But like many others who had opposed Gandhi at the Calcutta session, he agreed with Gandhi at the Nagpur Congress Session (1920) and accepted non-violent noncooperation as an instrument of fight.

In 1921 Lajpat Rai presided over the Punjab Provincial Political Conference and was arrested. After his release and the withdrawal of the Non-Cooperation Movement, Lajpat Rai joined the Swarajya Party founded by C. R. Das and Motilal Nehru. On October 30, 1928, Lajpat Rai led a procession at Lahore for the boycott of the Simon Commission and received baton blows on the head and the chest from an English officer. Eighteen days, after this brutal assault he died of his injuries.

Lajpat Rai had a cosmopolitan outlook and was a staunch fighter against imperialism everywhere. He recognised the right of all the countries in Western Asia to freedom. He sympathised

with the sufferings of Indians in South Africa. He had a high sense of national self-respect. He took Miss Mayo to task for her book, 'Mother India' to which he replied by his 'Unhappy India'. It was a powerful and a scathing refutation of Miss Mayo's scurrilous attacks on Indian society. Lajpat Rai was a prolific writer. He was deeply interested in journalism and founded an Urdu daily, the Bande Mataram and an English weekly, the People.

Lajpat Rai was called 'Sher-i-Punjab' (Lion of the Punjab). Although he may have been wanting in the charms of Gokhale and the sheer magnetic power of Gandhiji, his integrity, sacrifice and persuasive power gave a special dignity to his carriage.

C VIJAYARAGHAVACHARIAR (1852-1944)

President-Nagpur, 1920

Salem C. Vijayaraghavachariar, as he was popularly known, was born on June 18, 1852 in an orthodox Vaishnavite Brahmin family at Pon Vilaindha Kalathur, in Chingleput district, Tamil Nadu. His father being a purohit and steeped in religious lore, was eager to bring up his son according to orthodox traditions. At a very early age, Vijayaraghavachariar was sent to the Veda Pathshala in his village and was brought up in a tradition of memorising the Vedas. This stood him in good stead in later years. His English education began in his twelfth year when he joined the Madras Pachaiyappa High School. He matriculated in 1870. He graduated from the Madras Presidency College in 1875.

Appearing privately for the Law examination he began to practice in 1881. He was an able Advocate and a leader of the Bar at Salem. In 1882, a short time after he set up practice at Salem there was a Hindu-Muslim riot. Vijayaraghavachariar was implicated in the riot and charges were framed against him. He relentlessly fought the charges in the Court of Law and finally came out unscathed. Fighting the case for those implicated in the Salem riots of 1882 made Vijayaraghavachariar famous overnight. He was called "The Hero of Salem" and "Lion of South India". When the Indian National Congress was started in 1885 he was one of the special invitees. He was a close associate of A. O. Hume, the founder of the Indian National Congress. He attended the Bombay session of the Congress and in 1887 he was one of the

members of the committee which drafted the constitution of the Indian National Congress. From then on Vijayaraghavachariar became an ardent freedom fighter. His counsels and leadership were much sought after by the Congressmen of the early days.

With the advent of Mahatma Gandhi, there was a rift in the Congress ranks between the old moderates and the new radicals. Even earlier, the ideas of the moderates did not appeal to him. He kept aloof from active party work for a period after the Surat split of the Congress and later joined with redoubled vigour to carry the message of the Mahatma. The climax of his political career came when in 1920 he was elected to preside over the Indian National Congress Session at Nagpur, where Gandhiji's advocacy of 'Poorna Swaraj' through non-violent non-cooperation was debated and accepted. He, with his powerful oratory, gave many a wordy battle to C. R. Das and Motilal Nehru on the question of the Council Entry Programme drawn up by them.

He was also in the vanguard of the opposition to the Simon Commission that toured the country in 1929. He took an active part in the Committee that met under Motilal Nehru to frame the Constitution for India. In 1895 he was elected to the Madras legislative Council which he served for 6 years, till 1901. In 1913 he was elected to the Imperial Legislative Council with which he was associated till 1916. When Lord Birkenhead the Secretary of State for India threw out a challenge whether Indians could draw up a Constitution for India Vijayaraghavachariar took up the challenge and drew up the Swaraj Constitution for India.

In many aspects, Vijayaraghavachariar was much ahead of his time. He advocated post-puberty marriage for women and also the right of a daughter to have a share in her father's property. He advocated the much needed change in the Hindu law at a time when any talk about it was a taboo. He was a champion of the Depressed Classes. He was one of the two Vice Presidents of the Madras' Branch of the Passive Resistance Movement. Mahatma Gandhi was its President, the other Vice-President was G. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, Editor of the Hindi.

He lived to the ripe old age of ninety-two. Though the diadem of leadership in South India, passed on from his hands to C. Rajagopalachari, he contented himself with giving periodic advice on matters of public importance through his regular contributions to the Madras journals. His long life had been a period of relentless struggle against Imperialism and economic and social distress. Though an anti-imperialist, he had life-long friendship with some of its representatives in India, viz., Governors and Viceroys, Lord Ripon, Lord Curzon, Lord and Lady Hardinge.

The voice of the Lion of South India was stilled when he passed away on April 19, 1944. After his death, his valuable collections were treasured in the Memorial Library and Lecture Halls specially constructed and named after him.

It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of a written constitution. Almost all modem countries possessed of a constitutional government have written constitutions. England seems to be the only exception but only a partial exception, for her constitution is made up as well of charters and statutes as of traditions and usages preserved as common law by the line of great judges who contributed to the national freedom of England no less than her great statesmen and soldiers. I venture to submit that it is too late to think of an unwritten constitution.

From the Presidential Address-C. Vijayaraghavachariar

I.N.C. Session, 1920, Nagpur

HAKIM AJMAL KHAN (1863-1927)

President-Ahmedabad, 1921

The ancestors of Hakim Ajmal Khan came to India in the Company of Babur. During the reign of Akbar the family took up the medical profession. Into this distinguished family of physicians Ajmal Khan was born in 1863 at Delhi.

According to the system of the time Ajmal Khan first learnt the Quran by heart, then studied the traditional Islamic Sciences. He studied medicine in his own house. After Hakim Ajmal Khan established his position in the family profession he was appointed the chief physician to the Nawab of Rampur in 1892 where he remained till 1902. During his stay at Rampur, he became interested in the educational movement started by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and was appointed one of the trustees of the Aligarh College. He resigned from the position during the non-cooperation movement

when the authorities of the Aligarh Muslim University refused to participate in the movement.

In his thirties Hakim Ajmal Khan began to take interest in political issues by writing short notes in his family owned Urdu Weekly, Akmal-ul-Akhbar, which was started some time between 1865 and 1870 and had survived till the beginning of the 20th Century. The beginning of the 20th Century was a new era so far as the family was concerned. Hakim Ajmal Khan was the first to enter politics and within no time became a leading figure. In his early political career he appears to have been more interested in Muslim politics. In 1906 he was included in the Muslim deputation which met the Viceroy at Simla to present him a memorandum on behalf of the community. In 1906 he also participated in the Dacca meet of the Muslims which had been called for the purpose of organizing a Muslim political party. Hakim Ajmal Khan was one of those who seconded the move, and the Muslim League was thus born.

Hakim Ajmal Khan also took much interest in the expansion and development of the indigenous system of medicine, Tibb-i-Yunani. In order to introduce modern methods of research he transformed his family established Tibbiya School into Tibbiya College of Delhi. He added a research department, and a section for teaching midwifery. He encouraged upper class women to take up midwifery. In recognition of his services in this field the Government of India conferred on him, in 1907 the title of Haziq-ul-Mulk.

In the second decade of the 20th century we find another Hakim Ajmal Khan who was gradually drifting away from 'loyal' politics to 'national' politics. In 1910 the Government of India proposed to withdraw the professional recognition given to the Hakims and Veds. Hakim Ajmal Khan saw in the move an attempt of doing away with the Indian medicinal system. He organized the Hakims and Veds to protest against the proposed bill. About the same time, Tripoli was attacked by Italy; the British adopted an indifferent attitude and the Indian Muslims resented that and began to organise themselves. Ajmal Khan threw himself into the movement. Meanwhile World War I began and Indian politics stood still. But the participation of Turkey in the War changed the

situation. Many Muslim leaders were arrested. Hakim Ajmal Khan, like many other Indians had been helping the Government in the War effort. But the mass arrest of Muslim Leaders forced him to withdraw his support. In 1917 Hakim Ajmal Khan came to Gandhiji and other Congress Leaders. The association transformed the'loyal' Ajmal Khan, into the 'rebel' Ajmal Khan. He renounced his title in 1920. In appreciation the Indian public honoured him with the title of Masih-ul-Mulk by which he is still known. In 1921 he was elected President of the Indian National Congress in place of the previously elected President, C. R. Das, who was arrested well before the session started. Heart trouble claimed his life on December 29, 1927.

The spirit of non-cooperation pervades throughout the country and there is no true Indian heart even in the remotest corner of this great country which is not filled with the spirit of cheerful suffering and sacrifice to attain Swaraj and see the Punjab and the Khilafat wrongs redressed.

From the Presidential Address-Hakim Ajmal Khan

I.N.C., 1921 Session, Ahmedabad.

DESHBANDHU CHITTARANJAN DAS (1870-1925)

President-Gaya, 1922.

Chittaranjan Das, whose life is a landmark in the history of India's struggle for freedom, was endearingly called 'Deshbandhu' (Friend of the country). Born on November 5, 1870 in Calcutta, he belonged to an upper middle class Vaidya family of Telirbagh in the then Dacca district. His father, Bhuban Moban Das, was a reputed solicitor of the Calcutta High Court. An ardent member of the Brahmo Samaj, he was also well-known for his intellectual and Journalistic pursuits. Chittaranjan's patriotic ideas were greatly influenced by his father's.

After receiving his early education at the London Missionary Society's Institution at Bhowanipore (Calcutta), Chittaranjan passed the entrance examination in 1885 as a private candidate. He graduated from the Presidency College in 1890. He then went to England to compete for the I.C.S.; but he was "the last man out" in his year. Therefore he joined the Inner Temple and was called

to the Bar in 1894. It was Bankim Chandra who partly influenced him in his political ideas. While at the Presidency College, Chittaranjan was a leading figure of the Student's Association; and from Surendranath Banerjea he took his first lessons in Public service and elocution.

In 1894 Das came back to India and enrolled himself as a Barrister of the Calcutta High Court. But he did not get the backing badly needed to make a good start in the profession.

In 1907 he appeared as the defence lawyer of Brahma (bhadhav) Upedhyaya and Bhupendranath Dutta who were prosecuted for sedition. His abilities as an advocate evoked general admiration, though he did not succeed in baffling the prosecution. The turning point in his career came when he was called upon to appear on behalf of Aurobindo Ghose in the Alipore Bomb Case (1908). It was due to his brilliant handling of the case that Aurobindo was ultimately acquitted. This case brought Das to the forefront professionally and politically.

Chittaranjan was the defence counsel in the Dacca Conspiracy Case (1910-11). He was famed for his handling of both civil and criminal law.

It was, however, not before 1917 that Das came to the forefront of nationalist politics. In that year he was invited to preside over the Bengal Provincial Conference held at Bhowanipore. At the Conference Chittaranjan gave in Bengali his memorable presidential speech, animated by lofty idealism and patriotic fire. Chittranjan's political career was brief but meteoric. In course of only eight years (1917-25) he rose to all-India fame by virtue of his ardent patriotism, sterling sincerity and oratorical power. His advent into politics in 1917 took place at a crucial moment. He played a significant role in the controversy over the election of Mrs. Annie Besant as President of the Indian National Congress for its Calcutta Session. During this period (1917-18) he also took part in the agitation against the Government policy of internment and deportation under the Defence of India Act. On the eve of the Calcutta Session (1917) of the Congress, he had been on a lecturing tour m Eastern Bengal, addressing large gatherings on Self-Government.

In 1918, both at the Congress special session in Bombay and at the Annual Session in Delhi, Das opposed the scheme of Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms as wholly inadequate and disappointing.

The demand for Provincial Autonomy was successfully propounded in the teeth of vehement opposition from Mrs. Besant and others. In 1919 Chittaranjan went to Punjab as a member of the non-official Jallianwala Bagh Enquiry Committee. At the Amritsar Congress (1919) he made the first advocacy of obstruction while opposing the idea of co-operation with the Government in the implementation of the 1919 Reforms.

In 1920 at a special session of the Congress held at Calcutta under the presidency of Lajpat Rai, Gandhiji announced his famous programme of Non-Cooperation. Das sought some changes in it but in vain. He however, had the support of Pal, Malaviya, Jinnah and Mrs. Besant. Three months later the Congress met at Nagpur where he, however, accepted Gandhiji's lead and came back to Calcutta to renounce his large practice at the Bar. The whole nation was deeply impressed to see this supreme act of self-sacrifice. Besides the Non-Cooperation Movement, the large-scale exodus of the Coolies from the Assam tea garden and the strike of the Assam-Bengal railway employees engaged his attention in 1921.

In its repressive measures the Government declared as illegal the Congress Volunteers' organisation which took a leading part in the boycott of the visit of the Prince of Wales (1921). Deshbandhu decided to defy the arbitrary government order. Deshbandhu himself was arrested and sentenced to six months' imprisonment. After his release in 1922, he was elected President for the Congress Session at Gaya.

With the suspension of the Non-Cooperation Movement Deshbandhu. endeavoured to give a new orientation to Indian politics through his Council-Entry programme, i.e. "Non-Cooperation from within the Councils". He however met with vehement opposition from the Mahatma and the "No-changer". At the Gaya Congress C. Rajagopalachari led the Council-Entry opposition. His motion being lost, Deshbandu resigned the

president-ship. Thereafter he organised the Swarajya Party within the Congress in collaboration with Motilal Nehru, the Ali brothers, Ajmal Khan, V. J. Patel, Pratap Guha Roy and others. It was initially known as the Congress-Swaraj-Khilafat Party. In spite of the bitter criticism launched by the "No-changers" like Shyam, Sundar Chakraborty and J. L. Banerjee, the Jalpaiguri Conference was organised by the Swarajists in 1923. Through the efforts of the Swarajists, Maulana Azad was elected President of the Congress Special Session at Delhi, where the programme of Council-Entry was approved. The programme was later confirmed at the Cocanada Session.

Deshbandhu wanted "Swaraj for the masses, not for the classes." He believed in non-violent and constitutional methods for the realisation of national independence. In the economic field, Das stressed the need of constructive work in villages. A champion of national education and vernacular medium, he felt that the masses should be properly educated to participate in the nationalist movement.

Chittaranjan also made his mark as a poet and an essayist. His religious and social outlook was liberal. A believer in women's emancipation, he supported the spread of female education and widow re-marriage. An advocate of intercaste marriage, he gave his own daughters in marriage Brahmm and Kayastha families.

Chittaranjan passed away on June 16, 1925 at Darjeeling at the age of 55. Great as a jurist, Chittaranjan was the greatest and most dynamic leader of the then Bengal. Above all, he was an apostle of Indian nationalism.

What is freedom? It is impossible to define the term; but one may describe it as that state, that condition, which makes it possible for a nation to realize its own individuality and to evolve its own destiny. The history of mankind is full of stirring stories as to how nations have struck for freedom in order to keep their nationalism and their individuality inviolate and untarnished.

From the Presidential Address-Deshbandhu C. R. Das

I.N.C. Session, 1922, Gaya.

(Presented by Mahama Gandhi)

MAULANA MOHAMMAD ALI (1878-1931)

President-Cocanada (Kakinada), 1923

Mohammad Ali was born at Rampur in U. P. on December 10, 1878. He had his education at Allahabad and Oxford. He failed to get into the I.C.S. On his return from England he was appointed Chief Education Officer in the State of Rampur. He could not however, successfully adapt himself to "court politics" and soon resigned. After a few years service with the Gaikwad of Baroda, he discovered the journalist in him and started writing on contemporary issues in reputed English papers of his time. One of his long articles "Thoughts in the present discontent" which was serialised in The Times of India, Bombay 1907, won the praise of Lord Minto, the then Viceroy of India. His bosses, however, anticipating his involvement in politics, instructed him to have his writings censored before sending them to press. Mohammad Ali could not accept this condition and submitted his resignation to start his own paper.

In January 1911 his weekly Comrade appeared from Calcutta In 1912 the Comrade moved to Delhi and the first issue of the Delhi edition appeared on October 12. Almost every issue carried articles and editorials exposing the hostile attitude of the British to the Muslim world in general and to Turkey in particular. As a result, it was banned in 1914 under the Press Act. It was, however, revived in 1924 but could not live for more than two more years.

In Delhi Mohammad Ali also started an Urdu daily, the Hamdard in 1913 which in its 16 years of life maintained every healthy tradition of English journalism and was very much in demand. For his anti-British writings he was arrested in 1915 and remained a political prisoner till December 1919. When released, he was no longer a mere journalist but had been transformed into a national leader. He, however, realised that his objectives were unlikely to be achieved as long as the British power in India was not weakened. He, therefore, took up very seriously the cause of the Indian National Congress and within no times ably won the sympathy and support of Gandhiji in the cause of the Khilafat on the one hand and prepared the Muslims on the other, to accept Gandhiji as one of their own leaders, and to plunge with the Hindus into the struggle for freedom.

In the wake of the non-cooperation movement he founded the National Muslim University known as Jamia Millia Islamia, then at Aligarh later shifted to Delhi in 1920. He became its first 'Shaikhul-Jamia' the Vice Chancellor. His political pre-occupations did not permit him to stay in office for long, but he remained in close touch with the institution as long as he lived.

Mohammad Ali could compromise with no one on issues which he considered contrary to his convictions. The result was that the political and communal vicissitudes of the late twenties drew Mohammad Ali way not only from the Indian National Congress, of which he was once the President and was always considered its indivisible part, but also from many of his fellow Muslims in the Congress, who could not appreciate his outspokenness. The finale was pathetic. Mohammad Ali, once the uncrowned king of the national forces of Muslim India, was a lone soul in his last days, politically heart-broken and physically diabetic.

At the time of the first Round Table Conference of 1930, despite his knowledge of the possible fatal consequences of his journey to England, he decided to go there convinced in his own heart that he had to do his duty by his people. In his last speech at the Conference Mohammad Ali prophetically declared that he would never return to India alive if he was not freed of the British yoke. Within a day or two he died there (January 4, 1931) and his body was taken for burial to the sacred soil of Jerusalem.

I had long been convinced that here in this Country of hundreds of millions of human beings, intensely attached to religion, and yet infinitely split up into communities, sects and denominations, Providence had created for us the mission of solving a unique problem and working out a new synthesis, which was nothing low than a Federation of Faiths... For more than twenty years I have dreamed the dream of a federation, grander, nobler and infinitely more spiritual than the United States of America, and today when many a political Cassandra prophesies a return to the bad old days of Hindu-Muslim dissensions 1 still dream that old dream of "United Faiths of India."

From the Presidential Address-Maulana Mohammad Ali

I.N.C. Session, 1923, Cocanada.

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD (1888-1958)

President-Delhi, 1923 (Special Session); Ramgarh, 1940

Born in 1888, Firoz Bakht (of exalted destiny), commonly called Muhiyuddin Ahmad, was two when his parents settled at Calcutta; his father, Maulana Khairuddin, became famous here as a spiritual guide.

Still in his teens, Muhiyuddin using the pseudonym Abul Kalam Azad acquired a high reputation for his writings on religion and literature in the standard Urdu journals of the time. The education Azad received, mostly from his father, was traditional. He did not go to any Madrasah, nor did he attend any modern institution of western education. Learning at home he completed the traditional course of higher Islamic education at sixteen instead of the normal twenty or twenty-five. About the same time he was exposed to the writings of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. Keeping it a secret from his father, he started leaning English and by his own effort acquired enough knowledge of the language to study advanced books on history and philosophy.

This led him, although unnoticed by others, to the stage of what he called-'atheism' and 'sinfulness.' Azad remained in this stage of spiritual dilemma till the age of twenty-two. About the same time Azad's political ideas were also in turmoil. He wanted to see his country free from the British rule. But he did not approve of the Congress movement on account of its 'slowness': also he could not join the Muslim League whose political goal he found unpredictable. Thus he associated himself with the Hindu revolutionaries of Bengal in spite of their 'exclusive' and indifferent attitude to the Muslims. He managed, however, to convince them that the systematic exclusion of the Muslims from the group would ultimately make political struggle much more difficult.

For politicalising his community Azad started from July 13, 1912 an Urdu weekly, the Al-Hilal (The Crescent), from Calcutta. Its influence was prodigious. Azad was politically and religiously radical. The paper... shocked the conservatives and created a furore; but there were many Muslims ready to follow him. In the pages of the AI-Hilal Azad began to criticize the 'loyal' attitude of the Muslims to the British, and the 'hostile' attitude of the

British to the Muslim world in general. The Government of Bengal unhappy with editorial policy, put pressure on the paper. Meanwhile World War I broke out and publication was banned in 1914 by the Bengal Government. From November 12, 1915, Abul Kalam started a new weekly, the AI-Balagh from Calcutta, which continued till March 31, 1916. The publication of the Al-Balagh was also banned by the Government of Bengal and Maulana Azad was exiled from Calcutta under the Defence of India Regulations.. The Governments of Punjab, Delhi, U.P. and Bombay had already prohibited his entry into their provinces under the same Regulations. The only province he could conveniently stay in was Bihar, and he went therefore to Ranchi, where he was interned till January 1, 1920.

From 1920 till 1945 Abul Kalam Azad was in and out of prison a number of times. After he was released from Ranchi he was elected President of the All-India Khilafat Committee (Calcutta session in 1920), and President of the Unity Conference (Delhi) in 1924. In 1928 he presided over the Nationalist Muslim Conference. He was appointed in 1937 a member of the Congress Parliamentary Sub-Committee to guide the Provincial Congress Ministries. He was twice elected President of the Indian National Congress, the first time in 1923 when he was only thirty-five years old, and the second time in 1940. He continued as the President of the Congress till 1946, for no election was held during this period as almost every Congress leader was in prison on account of the Quit India Movement (1942). After the leaders were released Maulana Azad, as the President of the Congress, led the negotiations with the British Cabinet Mission in 1946, and when India became independent he was appointed Education Minister, a position in which he continued till his death on February 22, 1958.

Azad's religious ideas were not widely influential. He expressed himself in Urdu, and thus limited himself to a particular group. The majority of the Indians did not really know what Azad was saying. Another reason was political. He was in the Congress, and was considered a party-man. Thus whatever he said about the unity of religion was taken by many Muslims, who used to read, him, as the reflection of his political ideas, and, therefore,

had to be discarded. Also, on the question of Muslims' traditional religious education, Azad was unorthodox. He was among those few who were not shaken in their faith in composite nationalism even by partition. He was a great, orator and a matchless writer.

Full eleven centuries have passed by since then. Islam has now as great a claim on the soil of India as Hinduism. If Hinduism has been the religion of the people here for several thousands of years Islam also has been their religion for a thousand years. Just as a Hindu can say with pride that he is an Indian and follows Hinduism, so also we can say with equal pride that we are Indians and follow Islam. I shall enlarge this orbit still further. The Indian Christian is equally entitled to say with pride that he is an Indian and is following a religion of India, namely Christianity.

From the Presidential Address-Maulana Abul Kalam Azad,

I.N.C. Session, 1940, Ramgarh

MAHATMA GANDHI (1869-1948)

President-Belgaum, 1924

Mahatma Gandhi was born in Porbandar in the present state of Gujarat on October 2, 1869, and educated in law at University College, London. In 1891, after having been admitted to the British bar, Gandhiji returned to India and attempted to establish a law practice in Bombay, with little success. Two years later an Indian firm with interests in South Africa retained him as legal adviser in its office in Durban. Arriving in Durban, Gandhiji found himself treated as a member of an inferior race. He was appalled at the widespread denial of civil liberties and political rights to Indian immigrants to South Africa. He threw himself into the struggle for elementary rights for Indians.

Gandhiji remained in South Africa for 20 years, suffering imprisonment many times. In 1896, after being attacked and beaten by white South Africans, Gandhiji began to teach a policy of passive resistance to, and non-cooperation with, the South African authorities. Part of the inspiration for this policy came from the Russian writer Leo Tolstoy, whose influence on Gandhiji was profound. Gandhiji also acknowledged his debt to the teachings of Christ and to the 19th-century American writer Henry David

Thoreau, especially to Thoreau's famous essay "Civil Disobedience." Gandhiji considered the terms passive resistance and civil disobedience inadequate for his purposes, however, and coined another term, Satyagraha (Sanskrit, "truth and firmness"). During the Boer War, Gandhiji organized an ambulance corps for the British army and commanded a Red Cross unit. After the war he returned to his campaign for Indian rights. In 1910, he founded Tolstoy Farm, near Durban, a cooperative colony for Indians. In 1914 the government of the Union of South Africa made important concessions to Gandhiji's demands, including recognition of Indian marriages and abolition of the poll tax for them. His work in South Africa complete, he returned to India.

Gandhiji became a leader in a complex struggle, the Indian campaign for home rule. Following World War I, in whe played an active part in recruiting campaigns, Gandhiji,again advocating Satyagraha, launched his movement of passive resistance to Great Britain. When, in 1919, Parliament passed the Rowlatt Acts, giving the Indian colonial authorities emergency powers to deal with so-called revolutionary activities, Satyagraha spread through India, gain millions of followers. A demonstration against the Rowlatt Acts resulted in a massacre of Indians at Amritsar, which was the result of indiscriminate firingTH by British soldiers; in 1920, when the British government failed to make amends, Gandhiji proclaimed an organized campaign of non-cooperation. Indians in public office resigned from government service, agencies such as courts of law were boycotted, and Indian children were withdrawn from government schools. Through India, streets were blocked by squatting Indians who refused to rise even when beaten by police. Gandhiji was arrested, but the British were soon forced to release him.

Economic independence for India, involving the complete boycott of British goods, was made a corollary of Gandhiji's Swaraj (Sanskrit, "self-ruling") movement. The economic aspects of the movement were significant, for the exploitation of Indian villagers by British industrialists had resulted in extreme poverty in the country and the virtual destruction of Indian home industries. As a remedy for such poverty, Gandhiji advocated revival of cottage industries; he began to use a spinning wheel as a token of the

return to the simple village life he preached, and of the renewal of native Indian industries. Gandhiji became the international symbol of a free India. He lived a spiritual and ascetic life of prayer, fasting, and meditation. His union with his wife became, as he himself stated, that of brother and sister. Refusing earthly possessions, he wore the loincloth and shawl of the lowliest Indian and subsisted on vegetables, fruit juices, and goat's milk. Indians revered him as a saint and began to call him Mahatma (great-souled), a title reserved for the greatest sages. Gandhiji's advocacy of nonviolence, known as ahimsa (non-violence), was the expression of a way of life implicit in the Hindu religion.

By the Indian practice of nonviolence, Gandhiji held, Great Britain too would eventually consider violence useless and would leave India. The Mahatma's political and spiritual hold on India was so great that the British authorities dared not interfere with him. In 1921 the Indian National Congress, the group that spearheaded the movement for nationhood, gave Gandhiji complete executive authority, with the right of naming his own successor.

The Indian population, however, could not fully comprehend the unworldly ahimsa. A series of armed revolts against Great Britain broke out, culminating in such violence that Gandhiji confessed the failure of the civil-disobedience campaign he had called, and ended it. The British government again seized and imprisoned him in 1922. After his release from prison in 1924, Gandhiji withdrew from active politics and devoted himself to propagating communal unity. Unavoidably, however, he was again drawn into the vortex of the struggle for independence. In 1930 the Mahatma proclaimed a new campaign of civil disobedience, calling upon the Indian population to refuse to pay taxes, particularly the tax on salt. The campaign was a march to the sea, in which thousands of Indians followed Gandhiji from Ahmedabad to the Arabian Sea, where they made salt by evaporating sea water. Once more the Indian leader was arrested, but he was released in 1931, halting the campaign after the British made concessions to his demands. In the same year Gandhiji represented the Indian National Congress at a conference in London.

In 1932, Gandhiji began new civil-disobedience campaigns against the British. Arrested twice, the Mahatma fasted for long periods several times; these fasts were effective measures against the British, because revolution might well have broken out in India if he had died. In September 1932, while in jail, Gandhiji undertook a "fast unto death" to improve the status of the Hindu Untouchables. The British, by permitting the Untouchables to be considered as a separate part of the Indian electorate, were, according to Gandhiji, countenancing an injustice. Although he was himself a member of the Vaishya (merchant) caste, Gandhiji was the great leader of the movement in India dedicated to eradicating the unjust social and economic aspects of the caste system. In 1934 Gandhiji formally resigned from politics, being replaced as leader of the Congress party by Jawaharlal Nehru. Gandhiji traveled through India, teaching ahimsa and demanding eradication of "untouchability." The esteem in which he was held was the measure of his political power.

So great was this power that the limited home rule granted by the British in 1935 could not be implemented until Gandhiji approved it. A few years later, in 1939, he again returned to active political life because of the pending federation of Indian principalities with the rest of India. His first act was a fast, designed to force the ruler of the state of Rajkot to modify his autocratic rule. Public unrest caused by the fast was so great that the colonial government intervened; the demands were granted. The Mahatma again became the most important political figure in India.

When World War II broke out, the Congress party and Gandhiji demanded a declaration of war aims and their application to India. As a reaction to the unsatisfactory response from the British, the party decided not to support Britain in the war unless the country were granted complete and immediate independence. The British refused, offering compromises that were rejected. When Japan entered the war, Gandhiji still refused to agree to Indian participation. He was interned in 1942 but was released two years later because of failing health.

By 1944 the Indian struggle for independence was in its final stages, the British government having agreed to independence on condition that the two contending nationalist groups, the Muslim League and the Congress party, should resolve their differences. Gandhiji stood steadfastly against the partition of India but ultimately had to agree, in the hope that internal peace would be achieved after the Muslim demand for separation had been satisfied. India and Pakistan became separate states when the British granted India its independence in 1947. During the riots that followed the partition of India, Gandhiji pleaded with Hindus and Muslims to live together peacefully. Riots engulfed Calcutta, one of the largest cities in India, and the Mahatma fasted until disturbances ceased. On January 13, 1948, he undertook another successful fast in New Delhi to bring about peace, but on January 30, 12 days after the termination of that fast, as he was on his way to his evening prayer meeting, he was assassinated by a fanatic Hindu. Gandhiji's death was regarded as an international catastrophe. His place in humanity was measured not in terms of the 20th century, but in terms of history. A period of mourning was set aside in the United Nations General Assembly, and condolences to India were expressed by all countries. Religious violence soon waned in India and Pakistan, and the teachings of Gandhiji came to inspire nonviolent movements elsewhere, notably in the U.S. under the civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. and in South Africa under Nelson Mandela.

I have thus dilated upon the spinning wheel because I have no letter or other message for the nation. I know no other effective method for the attainment of Swaraj if it is to be by 'peaceful and legitimate means'. As I have already remarked it is the only substitute for violence that can be accepted by the whole nation. I swear by Civil Disobedience. But Civil Disobedience for the attainment of Swaraj is an impossibility unless and until we have attained the power of achieving boycott of foreign cloth.

From the Presidential Address-Mahatma Gandhi,

I.N.C. Session, 1924, Belgaum

SAROJINI NAIDU (1879-1949)

President-Kanpur, 1924

Sarojini, who called herself s "poetess-singer" was born in Hyderabad on February 13, 1879. She was the eldest daughter of

a remarkable scientist-philosopher father, Aghornath Chattopadhyaya and the gentle poetess mother, Barada Sundari Devi..

Learning more at home than in school she matured very early wrote poems instead of learning Algebra and passed her matriculation at the age of 12 coming first in the Madras Presidency. Her academic life in England in 1895 led to a serious break down in health which was to affect her all her life, At the age of 15 she had met Dr. Govindarajulu Naidu and fallen deeply in love. Though she did not complete her academic career, the English experience brought her into contact with the great English poet Edmund Gosse. She published in 1905, 1912 and 1917 lyrics and melodious Indian poems. Arthur Symons, a famous literary critic also gave her counsel and guidance in the mastery of English phrase and rhythm. After 1917 politics claimed her and she counsel and guidance in the mastery of English claimed her and she wrote no more poetry. On return to India she married Dr. Naidu a non Brahmin, under the brahmo Marriage Act (1872) in Madras in 1898.

During the years from 1903 to 1917 Sarojini was to meet all the key personalities of her life; Gokhale, Tagore, Jinnah, Annie Besant, C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer, Gandhi and Nehru. In 1919 she emerged as a political leader in her own right. Gokhale's death in1915 at the same time as her father's and her moving tribute to him emphasised her vision of Hindu Muslim unity, the strongest ideal of her life, for which she worked ceaselessly. On March 22, 1913 she addressed a huge gathering of Muslims at the historic session of the new Muslim League at Lucknow, the keynote of which was unity.

She proposed the Resolution an Self Government and paid high tributes to Jinnah. At a meeting of the Muslim League in December 1916, she gave a fiery speech on the Arms Act. From 1915 to 1918, Sarojini Naidu, Annie Besant and C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar lectured all over India on the welfare of youth, dignity of labour, women's emancipation and nationalism. She met Jawaharlal Nehru for the first time at the Congress session in Lucknow in 1916 and soon came into close touch with Gandhiji. She was elected President of the Congress in 1925..

From 1917 to 1919, Sarojini was involved in the most dynamic phase of public life of her career, campaigned for the Montagu Chelmsford Reforms, the Khilafat issue, the Rowlatt or "Black Bills", the Sabarmati Pact and the Satyagraha Pledge and was Gandhiji's most faithful lieutenant when he launched the Civil Disobedience Movement on April 6, 1919. With great courage she quelled the riots, sold proscribed literature and addressed frenzied meetings on Jallianwala Bagh and martial law in Amritsar. Sarojini returned the Kaiser i Hind medal to the Government, led a deputation to Montagu, Secretary of State for India, and fought for the rights of women. She sailed for England in 1919 as a member of the all India Home Rule Deputation and led a powerful agitation in England against sex-discrimination.

During the Bardoli campaign she sent a stirring message on the unity of India when Gandhiji suspended the C. D. movement after the Chauri Chaura incident. After the great trial of Gandhiji in 1922 Sarojini gave up her luxurious silks in favour of Khadi.

The Salt Satyagraha in which Sarojini took a leading part, her personal triumph at the Round Table Conference in London, which she attended as an associate of Gandhiji on behalf of the Congress and her arrest on her return to Delhi to be the acting President of the Congress and her vigorous campaign for the full participation of women and youth in public life are outstanding achievements of this era. During this period too, Sarojini was the great peace maker. She organised a National Week in 1940, virtually ran the whole Congress campaign at this stage, took an active part in the Cripps Mission in India and was jailed in 1942 in the Quit India Movement and detained with Gandhiji at the Aga Khan Palace at Poona. Partition was a great blow to her, it shattered her dream of Hindu Muslim unity. She was the first woman to be appointed as Governor of U.P. She died on March 2,1949. Jawaharlal Nehru said of her "Here was a person of great brilliance vital and vivid. Here was a person with so many gifts, but above all some gifts which made her unique. She infused artistry and poetry into our national struggle."

The National Congress must clearly issue a mandate to all those who come within its sphere to vacate their seats in the Central and Provincial Legislatures and inaugurate from Kailas

to Kanyakumari, from the Indus to the Brahmaputra, an untiring and dynamic campaign to arouse, consolidate, educate and prepare the Indian people for all the progressive and ultimate stages of our united struggle and teach them that no sacrifice is too heavy, no suffering too great, no martyrdom too terrible, that enables us to redeem our Mother from the unspeakable dishonour of her bondage, and bequeath to our children an imperishable legacy of Peace. In the battle for liberty, fear is the one unforgivable treachery and despair, the one unforgivable sin.

From the Presidential Address-Mrs. Sarojini Naidu

I.N.C., 1925, Kanpur.

S SRINIVASA LYENGAR (1874-1941)

President-Gauhati, 1926

The son of an orthodox Shri Vaishnava Brahmin and respected and affluent landowner of Ramanathapuram (Ramnad) district, Madras. Srinivasa was born on September 11, 1874.

Srinivasa Iyengar commenced practice the Madras High Court in 1898, and advanced to the top of the profession in an incredibly short time. His intimate knowledge of Hindu Dharma Shastras and of the great classics of jurisprudence and constitutional law coupled with his original inquiring mind, made him a legal thinker in his own right and his edition of Mayne's Hindu Law (1939) was hailed as a classic. Besides law, Srinivasa Iyengar's other interest were education, social reform, and politics. Among his early influences were Sir Sankaran Nair (who presided over the Amraoti Congress) and C. Vijayaraghavachariar (who presided over the Nagpur Congress 1920). He was also an admirer of Gokhale (in whose name he endowed a prize) and later of Mahatma.

Although Srinivasa Iyengar felt concerned about the developing political situation In India at least after 1910, it was only in 1920 that he took the plunge into politics, having resigned the office of Advocate General. He presided over the Madras Provincial Conference (1920) at Tirunelveli, gave up his princely practice at the Bar, resigned the membership of the Legislative Council (to which he had been returned by the Registered Graduates) returned the C.I.E. to the Government and took a

leading part in Congress affairs. He actively participated in the Congress sessions from Ahmedabad (1921) to Lahore (1929) and gave an unparalleled lead to the Congress in Madras for about ten years. After the Congress had decided on Council-Entry he led the party to victory in Madras in 1926 and was himself elected from Madras to the Central Assembly and also acted as Leader for a time when Motilal Nehru was away from India. Srinivasa lyengar presided over the Gauhati session of the Indian National Congress (December 1926) and during his tenure of president-ship did a great deal to bring about a rapprochement between the leaders of the Hindu and Muslim communities, and his efforts were crowned with success at the Madras Congress (December 1927) where the resolution on Hindu-Muslim unity was passed with general all-round support. It was also about this time that he published 'Swaraj Constitution', outlining a federal scheme of government for future India.

When the All-Parties Report (known as the Nehru Report) was published in 1928 outlining a constitution for India in terms of 'Dominion Status, Srinivasa Iyengar organised the Independence League with himself as President and Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose as Secretaries. The differences between Motilal Nehru and Srinivasa Iyengar on the issue of 'Dominion Status` versus 'Independence' became acute during 1929, and although it was decided finally in favour of Independence at the Lahore Congress in December 1929, Srinivasa lyengar himself decided to retire from active public life early in 1930. He made, however, a brief return to political life in 1939 as a dynamo of political thought, than an organisation man. He died suddenly on May 19, at his residence in Madras.

Srinivasa Iyengar was undoubtedly the most brilliant, the most dynamic and the most versatile of the South Indian leaders during the "between the wars" period. By his extensive educative tours in Madras, he carried the message of Nationalism to the remotest villages, and it was to his credit that he made the Madras Province Congress-minded. His great intellectual distinction, the singular purity of his personal life and his powerful advocacy of Indian's case for independence won for him numerous admirers all over India. Young Kamaraj of Virudhunagar was one of

Srinivasa Iyengar's many finds, and among his staunchest supporters were Satyamurti, Muthuranga Mudaliar and Subhas. Chandra Bose. Srinivasa Iyengar was a believer in "linked leadership", by which he meant that a real leader should maintain meaningful contacts with all the cadres in the political organisation and from the national to the village level. In recent decades, his ideal has been put to practice with great success.

The general policy of Congressmen in the Assembly and the various Council should be one of resistance to every activity, governmental or other, that may impede the nation's progress towards Swaraj.

From the Presidential Address-S. Srinivasa Iyengar

I.N.C. Session, 1926, Gauhati.

DR M A ANSARI (1880-1936)

President-Madras, 1927

The ancestors of Mukhtar Ahmad Ansari came to India during the reign of Sultan Muhammad Bin Tughlaq. The family started its career serving in the royal army and holding respectable posts in the court. It settled at Yusufpur, now in the Ghazipur District of U.P. The Ansaris of Yusufpur managed to hold respectable governmental positions. But by the time Mukhtar Ahmad Ansari was born on December 25, 1880, the prosperity of the family was on the decline. Graduating from the Victoria High School, Ghazipur in 1896 Mukhtar Ahmad moved to Hyderabed where his two brothers were in the service of the Nizam, for his university education.

Immediately after his graduation in medical science from Madras Medical College, Mukhtar Ahmad proceeded to England on a Nizam State Scholarship for higher medical education. He qualified for M.D. and M.S. in 1905, topping the list of successful candidates, by virtue of which he was the only Indian to be appointed Registrar, Lock Hospital, London. Later he was taken as the House Surgeon at the Charing Cross Hospital, London. The hospital acknowledged Dr. Ansari's outstanding services in the field of surgery by opening a ward in his name as the Ansari Ward.

During his long and fruitful stag in England Dr. Ansari was drawn into the Indian national scene by meeting and developing intimate relations with some Indian national leaders who used to visit London quite frequently. It was in London that he met and became a life-long friend of Motilal Nehru, Hakim Ajmal Khan and young Jawaharlal.

In spite of the ample opportunities for him to continue in a comfortable life abroad Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad Ansari returned home in 1910. After a short may at Hyderabed and his home town, Yusufpur, he established his medical practice in Delhi. Soon after, Dr. Ansari started taking part in active politics.

The first move in this direction was his leading, in December 1912, the Ansari Medical Mission to Turkey to provide medical and surgical aid to the fighting Turkish army in the Balkan War. Although the mission was organised by Muslim leaders, it paved the way for the Indian national leaders to put India on the world map by advocating and fostering international understanding.

This was the period when the Congress and the Muslim League were close in their political goals and one did not find it difficult to express oneself simultaneously from both the platforms. Thus, Dr. Ansari succeeded in establishing himself in both circles, and played an important role in the Lucknow Pact of 1916 in which the Muslim League and the Congress agreed upon the idea of proportional representation. In 1918 he presided over the annual session of the Muslim League held at Delhi.

His Presidential Address was proscribed by the Government because of his bold and fearless stand in it for the cause of the Khilafat and his unconditional support to the demand for complete freedom. Again in 1920 he was the President of the Nagpur session of the All-India Muslim League; at Nagpur also met at the same time the Indian National Congress under the president-ship of Vijayaraghavachariar of Madras, and the All-India Khilafat Committee with Maulana Abul Kalam Azad as its President. A joint session of all the three organisations was held.

Like in the Muslim League, Dr. Ansari held a high position in the Congress also. For almost all through his life he was member of its Working Committee. He was its General Secretary in the

years 1920, 1922, 1926, 1929, 1931 and 1932, and President in 1927 (Madras Session).

On question of entry in the Council to the government from inside Dr. Ansari remained with Gandhiji in the camp of the 'no-changers' who were against the entry. His personal relationship, however remained unsevered with the 'pro-changers', prominent among them being Pandit Motilal Nehru and Vithalbhai Patel. His Delhi Palatial house, 'Darus-salam', the Abode of Peace, was for all practical purposes like Congress House. Gandhiji used to stay there whenever he visited Delhi.

Although part of the inner circle Indian national life Dr. Anari also had access to the inner circle of the British bureaucracy in India. Thus, he often came to know in advance governmental decisions regarding prominent national leaders and was able to alert them in time non-cooperation days he took a keen interest in the establishment of independent national institutions for higher education, two them being the Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi and the Kashi Vidyapith at Benares. From its inception on October 29, 1920 Jamia Millia Islamia had the unconditional support of Dr. Absari. He was elected its Chancellor after the death of its firm Chancellor, Hakim Ajmal Khan.

Impressed by the political and social services of her husband Mrs. Ansari a devout and orthodox Muslim, also took a keen interest in the uplift of Delhi Women.

On the night of May 10, 1936 when he was returning from Mussoorie where he had gone to pay a professional visit to the Nawab of Rampur, Dr. Ansari heart beat for the lad time in the railway compartment. The news reached Delhi before the train brought his body back which was finally laid to rest in the lap of his beloved Jamia Millia Islamia.

India has been turned into a vast internment camp and a number of Indians abroad have been successfully locked out. Respectable citizens have been prevented from leaving India even for purposes of health, business or travel.

From the Presidential Address-Dr. M. A. Ansari

I.N.C. Session, 1927, Madras

PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU (1889-1964)

President-Lahore, 1929; Lucknow, 1936; Faizpur, 1936; New Delhi, 1951; Hyderabad, 1953; Calcutta, 1954

Jawaharlal Nehru was born at Allahabad on November 14, 1889, the son of Pandit Motilal Nehru and Swarup Rani. Motilal Nehru was a renowned lawyer of the North with a huge practice. Jawaharlal, was brought up in luxury, had European governesses and tutors, and was provided with a private swimming pool and tennis Courts He was educated at Harrow and Cambridge and took the Natural SciencesTripos from Trinity College. Later he qualified for the Bar from the Inner Temple.

Back home he joined his father's Chambers but his heart was not in legal practice, and he also soon got bored with the life of ease upper class Indians were accustomed to. He began to take an active interest in politics and showed early signs of being a radical-he disliked the Moderate group to which his father belonged. Mrs. Besant's internment caused a change heart among some Moderates and his father too drifted away from the orthodox Moderate position. In 1916 Jawaharlal married Kamala.

The Jallianwala Bagh massacre, Gandhiji's satyagraha movement and other events swept him completely into the national struggle. It did not take him long long to emerge as a great national leader. When he was only 40 he was elected to preside over the momentous Lahore session of the Congress in 1929-it was here that the resolution on Puna Swaraj was adopted. He often came into conflict with his father who was for Dominion Status. The two loved each other deeply in spite of their differences and it is likely the son influenced the father.

He had differences with Gandhiji also but these did not come in the way of his faith in the leadership of the Mahatma. Jawaharial so endeared himself to the latter that he wrote: "He is pure as crystal, he is truthful beyond suspicion. He is a knight sans peur, sans reproche. The nation is safe in his hands." Gandhiji nominated him as his political heir.

Jawaharlal spent many years of his political career in gaol. His life of sacrifice earned him the affection of his countrymen. Indeed next to the Mahatma he was our most popular leader. India and

its people became his major concern and during his tour of the country he was moved by the vast crowds that came to see him. He was a man of many interests, fond of nature, particularly the mountains. He was some what impetuous and in him there was a wonderful combination of the man of action and the man of thought. He wrote sensitively and his several books brought hirn international fame-"An Autobiography", "Glimpses of World History" and "Discovery of India" are among the more notable of his publications.

It is difficult to say which of Panditji's two periods is more memorable-the one before freedom or the one after it. During both he played a crucial role. His prime ministership of free India was a blessing to the nation. It was mainly because of him that the country did not go to pieces during the first years of upheaval. (We do not of course forget that there were others like Sardar Patel who did much to preserve the country's integrity. Nehru often differed from the Sardar and once or twice Gandhiji brought them together.)

Jawaharial Nehru was Prime Minister for seventeen years. During this period he worked to take India to the modem era and at the same time earned for it a place in the world. He himself came to be counted among the great leaders of his time, a bitter opponent of colonialism who was looked upon for inspiration by the Afro-Asian world. He will be remembered not only for the dams and laboratories he built and for laying the foundation of heavy industry. He will have his place in history as a man who had a great vision of India and the world and endeavoured to fulfil it by his action.

The only way to build for the future is to put aside or save something each year, and use this saving for some kind of progress. This may be improved agriculture, more river valley projects, more factories, more houses, more education or better health services. Our resources are limited and the most that we may hope to save has been indicated in the plan. Because of this limitation of resources, we have to make hard choices at every step and priorities become important. We have to choose sometimes between a river valley scheme and more housing or more schools. Unfortunately we cannot have all that we want at the same time.

The plan recommends one set of priorities. This may be varied, but we cannot go beyond the limits set by our resources as well as the social and political conditions and the Constitution.

From the Presidential Address-Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

I.N.C. Session, 1951, New Delhi.

SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL (1875-1950)

President-Karachi, 1931

Vallabhbhai Jhaverbhai Patel, one of the six children of Jhaverbbai Patel and Ladbai was born at Nadiad in Gujarat. There is no record of his date of birth. The generally accepted date, October 31, 1875, of which the source is his Matriculation certificate, was chosen by Vallabhbhai himself while filling in a form. The family was an agriculturist one, of the Lewa Patidar Community and could in terms of economic status be described as lower middle-class. It was poor and had no tradition of education. Vallabhbhai's childhood was spent away from books, in the ancestral fields at Karamsad. He was already in his late teens when he passed out from the Middle School at Karamsad and went to the High School at Nadiad from where he matriculated in 1897.

Even as a young boy Vallabhbhai displayed qualities of organization and leadership that marked him out for his future role. Once as a sixth-form boy he organized a successful strike of his classmates that lasted for three days to teach a lesson to one of the teachers who was unduly fond of the rod. Vallabhbhai must have inherited these attributes from his father who, it is said, had fought in the Mutiny under the Rani of Jhansi and was subsequently taken prisoner by Malharrao Holkar.

Vallabhbhai was a mature young man of twenty-two when he matriculated. Owing to the impecunious circumstances of the family higher education was not within his reach. The next best thing was to take a course in law and set up as a country lawyer. This he did and established a small practice at Godhra But an attack of plague, which he contracted while nursing a friend, made him leave the town and after spending some time in Nadiad, he moved on to Borsad in 1902, a town in the Kheda district where

at that time the largest number of criminal cases in Gujarat were recorded. Vallabhbhai became quite popular here as a defence lawyer.

Vallabhbhai now wanted to go to England and qualify as a Barrister. From his practice at Borsad he had earned enough for his expenses there but owing to certain circumstances he was not able to make the trip at once. His brother Vithalbhai desired that he should complete education in England firm and not Vallabhbhai Vallabhbhai readily acquiesced in this.

His wife, Zaverbai, died early in 1909 after an operation for some abdominal malady. When news of the bereavement reached Vallabhbhai, he was cross-examining a witness in a murder case at Anand. With an impregnable composure for which he became known later, he did not show grief but went on with the cross-examination in hand.

He finally sailed for England in 1910 joined the Middle Temple. Here he worked so hard and conscientiously that he topped in Roman Law, securing a prize, and was called to the Bar at the end of two years instead of the usual period of three years.

On his return to India in 1913, he set up practice in Ahmedabad and made a great success of it. He had ready wit, a fund of common sense and a deep sympathy for those who were the objects of the British officials' wrath and were caught in the clutches of the law, which was not the uncommon in the Kheda district. He came to enjoy a position in public life that his eminence as a Barrister. He accepted Mahatma Gandhi's leadership, having been tremendously impressed by the fearless lead that Mahatma Gandhi gave to right public wrongs. In 1917 he was elected for the first time as a Municipal in Councillor Ahmedabad. From 1924 to 1928 he was Chairman of the Municipal Committee. The years of his association with the, Municipal administration were marked by much meaningful work for the improvement of civic life. Work was done to improve water supply, sanitation and town planning and the Municipality came to be transformed from being a mere adjunct to the British rule into a popular body with a will of its own. There were also calamities like plague in 1917 and famine in 1918, and on both occasions Vallabhbhai did important work to relieve distress.

In 1917 he was elected Secretary of the Gujarat Sabha, a political body which was of great assistance to Gandhiji in his campaigns. The association with Mahatma Gandhi became closer during the Kheda Satyagraha in 1918, which was launched to secure exemption from payment of the land revenue assessment since the crops had failed. It took three months of intense campaigning that was marked by arrests, seizures of goods and chattels and livestock and much official brutality before relief was secured from an unwilling Government. Gandhiji said that if it were not for Vallabhbhai's assistance "this campaign would not have been carried through so successfully".

The five years from 1917 to 1922 were years of popular agitation in India. The end of the war was followed by the Rowlatt Act and still further curtailment of individual freedom. And then followed the Khilafat movement with massacres and terror in the Punjab. Gandhiji and the Congress decided on non-cooperation. Vallabhbhai left his practice for good and gave himself up wholly to political and constructive work, touring in villages, addressing meetings, organizing picketing of foreign cloth shops and liquor shops.

Then came the Bardoli Satyagraha. The occasion for the Satyagraha was the Government's decision to increase the assessment of land revenue from Bardoli taluka by 22 per cent and in some villages by as much as 50 to 60 per cent. Having failed to secure redress by other means the agriculturists of the taluka decided, at a Conference on February 12, 1928, to withhold payment of land revenue under the leadership of Vallabhbhai Patel. The struggle was grim and bitter.

There were seizures of property and livestock to such an extent that for days on end, people kept themselves and their buffaloes locked in. Arrests followed and then brutalities of the police and the hired Pathans. The struggle drew the attention of the whole country to it. Patels and Talatis resigned their jobs. Government revenues remained unrealized. The Government had ultimately to bow before popular resolve and an inquiry was instituted to find out to what extent the increase was justified and the realization of the increased revenue was postponed. It was a triumph not only of the 80,000 peasants of Bardoli but more

particularly of Vallabhbhai personally; he was given the title of "Sardar" by the nation.

About this time the political situation in the country was approaching a crisis. The Congress had accepted its goal of Purna Swaraj for the country, while the British Government through their policy of pitting one. interest against another and through constitutional tricks were trying to stifle the voice of freedom and doing everything they could to perpetuate their rule. The boycott of the Simon Commission was followed by the launching of the famous Salt Satyagraha by Gandhiji. Vallabhbhai Patel. though he had not committed any breach of the Salt Law, was the first of the national leaders to be arrested. He was in fact arrested on March 7, 1930-some days before Gandhiji set out on the march to Dandi. He was released in June. By then Gandhiji, Jawaharlal Nehru and other leaders were in jail and the tempo of the struggle in the country was rising. In a few months Vallabhbhai was back in prison.

In March 1931 Vallabhbhai presided over the 46th session of the Indian National Congress which was called upon to ratify the Gandhi-lrwin Pact, which had just then been concluded. The task was not an easy one, for Bhagat Singh and a few others had been executed on the very day the Congress session opened and delegates, particularly the younger sections, were in an angry mood, while Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Bose were not happy with the terms of the Pact. But the Congress finally put its seal on the Pact with one voice. Civil Disobedience was suspended, political prisoners were released and the Congress agreed to participate in the Round Table Conference.

The Round Table Conference failed. Gandhiji as also the other top leaders were arrested and a policy of repression followed. Vallabhbhai Patel was lodged with Gandhiji in Yeravada Jail and they were together there for sixteen months-from January 1932 to May 1933. Vallabhbhai then spent another year in the Nasik Jail.

When the Government of India Act 1935 came, the Congress, though generally critical of the Act, decided to try out those of its constitutional provisions that seemed to grant to India a measure of self-government and to take part in the elections for Provincial

legislatures that were envisaged under it. In seven of the eleven Provinces Congress majorities were returned and Congress Ministries were formed. Vallabhbhai Patel, as Chairman of the Congress Parliamentary Sub-Committee, guided and controlled the activities of these Ministries.

Not for very long, however, for, on September 3, 1939 when Britain declared war on Germany, the Viceroy without consulting either the Central or the Provincial Legis latures, proclaimed India as having entered the war as an ally of Britain. The Congress could not accept this position and the Congress Ministries resigned. Gandhiji launched Individual Civil Disobedience opposing India's participation in the war, and the Congress leaders began to court arrest. Vallabhbhai Patel was arrested on November 17, 1940. He was released on August 20,1941 on grounds of health. Then the All India Congress Committee passed the famous Quit India resolution in Bombay on August 8,1942, and Vallabhbhai, along with the other members of the Working Committee, was arrested on August 9, 1942 and detained in the Ahmednagar Fort while Gandhiji, Kasturba and Mahadev Desai were detained in the Aga Khan's Palace. The Sardar was in jail for about three years this time.

When, at the end of the war, the Congress leaders were freed and the British Government decided to find a peaceful constitutional solution to the problem of India's Independence, Vallabhbhai Patel was one of the chief negotiators of the Congress. When India attained Independence he became the Deputy Prime Minister and was responsible for the Home, States and the Information and Broadcasting portfolios. It was in this capacity that he was called upon to tackle the most intricate and baffling problem of the States' integration into the Union of India. And it is here that his tact, his powers of persuasion and his statesmanship came into full play. He handled the question as only he could have handled it, managing, in less than a year's time, to reduce the Princely States from 562 to 26 administrative units and bringing democracy to nearly 80 million people of India, comprising almost 27 per cent of the country's population. The integration of the States could certainly be termed as the crowning achievement of Vallabhbhai Patel's life. But for him, this may not

have been achieved easily and quickly. As Minister of Home Affairs, he presided over efforts to bring back order and peace to a country ravaged by communal strife unprecedented in its history. He accomplished this task with the ruthless efficiency of a great administrator. He sorted out the problems of partition, restored law and order and dealt with the rehabilitation of thousands of refugees with great courage and foresight. He reorganised our Services which had become depleted with the departure of the British and formed a new Indian Administrative Service, to provide a stable administrative base to our new democracy.

While Gandhiji gave to the Congress a programme for a broad-based action, it was Vallabhbhai who built up the Party machine to carry out that programme. No one before Vallabhbhai had given adequate thought to the need to have an effective organisation, but Vallabhbhai realised this need during his campaigns and devoted his organisational talents and energy to the building up of the strength of the Party which could be geared to fight in an organised and effective manner. His grip over the Party organisation was complete.

Vallabhbhai Patel was thus one of the chief architects and guardians of India's freedom and his contribution towards consolidating the freedom of the country remains unrivalled.

He died on December 15, 1950, leaving behind a son, Dahyabhai Patel, and a daughter, Maniben Patel.

I am not interested in loaves and fishes, or legislative honours. The peasantry do not understand them, they are little affected by them. I believe that Gandhiji's eleven points mean the substance of Swaraj. That which does not satisfy them is no Swaraj. Whilst I would respect the rights of landlords, rajas, maharajas and others to the extent, that they do not hurt the sweating millions, my interest lies in helping the downtrodden to rise from their state and be on a level with the tallest in the land.

Thank God the gospel of Truth and Non-Violence has given these an inkling of their dignity and the power they possess. Much still remains to be done. But let us make up our minds that we exist for them, not they for us. Lot us shed our petty rivalries and jealousies, feuds and let everyone realise that the Congress

represents and exists for the toiling millions and it will become an irresistible power...

From the Presidential Address-Sardar Vallabbbhai Patel

I.N.C. Session, 1931, Karachi.

NELLIE SEN GUPTA (1886-1973)

President-Calcutta, 1933

Daughter of Frederick William and Edith Henrietta Gray, Nellie was born in 1886 at Cambridge, England. She passed her Senior Cambridge in 1904. Jatindramohan Sen Gupta of Chittagong, Bengal was a student of Downing College and used to visit the family. They fell in love and were married in 1909, after which Jatindramohan returned to Chittagong with her.

The stormy Indian Freedom struggle absorbed Jatindramohan in 1921. Nellie forsook a cosy family life. She gladly shared his trials. After his imprisonment during the Assam-Bengal Railwaymen's strike, she forcefully 'protested against the District authorities' imposition of a ban on assembly, addressed mass meetings and courted arrest symbolically defying the law by hawking Khaddar cloth. In 1931 she suffered four months' imprisonment at Delhi for addressing an unlawful assembly.

The early thirties witnessed the Congress Committees banned and the leaders in jail but Nellie was fearlessly active. When Madan Mohan Malaviya was elected President of the Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress 1933 and was arrested, Nellie was chosen as the Congress President.

The Calcutta Corporation elected her an Alderman the same year and again in 1936. She was returned uncontested to the Bengal Legislative Assembly in 1940 and re-elected, in 1946, bitterly fighting a Communist. During World War II her fervent speech describing criminal assaults by soldiers on helpless village women in South Chittagong had a tremendous impact on both opposition and treasury benches. The Chief Minister, Nazimmuddin assured that such incidents would not recur.

After the partition of India in 1947, she chose to live in Pakistan. She was returned unopposed to the East Pakistan Legislature in 1954. Though elected a member of the Minority Board, she

recognised no communal barriers and often ignored failing health and poor eyesight. She never spared herself during calamities like floods and cyclones as in 1946.

An Englishwoman, earnestly serving the cause of Indians and their freedom, dignified and unassuming, courageous and ever prepared to take risks and suffer privations, Nellie Sen Gupta was opposed to all social disabilities and economic disparities.

She returned to India for medical treatment, and was treated with great respect by the Indira Gandhi Government. She died in Calcutta in 1973.

DR RAJENDRA PRASAD (1884-1963)

President-Bombay, 1934

On December 3, 1884, in an obscure village in the Saran district of North Bihar, Rajendra Prasad, whose life was to be an embodiment of the Gandhian principles was born. He was to Gandhiji, to quote Sarojini Naidu, what John was to Christ. Jawaharlal called him the symbol of Bharat and found "truth looking at you through those eyes".

He passed the Entrance examination of the Calcutta University at the age of eighteen, in 1902, standing first in the first division. At that time the educational jurisdiction of the Calcutta University extended from Sadiya, the easternmost frontier of British India, to a little beyond Peshawar on the North-west. The feat was indeed remarkable. He joined the Presidency College, Calcutta.

He had been initiated into the cult of 'Swadeshi' by his elder brother, Mahendra Prasad, even before his arrival in Calcutta. The formation of the Bihari Students' Conference followed in 1908. It was the first organisation of its kind in India. It not only led to an awakening, it nurtured and produced practically the entire political 1eadership of the twenties in Bihar.

At the time he set himself up as a legal practitioner in Calcutta in 1911, apprenticed to Khan Bahadur Shamsul Huda, he also joined the Indian National Congress and was elected to the AICC. A year earlier, he impressed Sir Asutosh Mukherjee so deeply that the latter offered him a Lectureship in the Presidency Law College. Gopal Krishna Gokhale, one of the greatest political leaders of

India in those days, had met him in Calcutta a year earlier and had exhorted him to join the Servants of India Society in Poona, but the pressure of his family held him back and he started practice in Patna on the establishment of the High Court of Bihar and Orissa.

In the April 1917 AICC session, held in Calcutta, Gandhiji and Rajendra Prasad sat very close to each other but he did not know that Gandhiji was to be taken to his residence in Patna on his way to Champaran. This meeting with Gandhiji became a turning point in his career.

He stayed-with Gandhiji till his trial was over. Thereafter, things in the country took a different course, by reason of the Rowlatt Act and the Punjab upheaval, and, in 1920, even before the civil disobedience and non-cooperation resolution of the special session of the Congress held in Calcutta in September had been confirmed by the regular session held in December at Nagpur he took the plunge. He openly pledged himself to defy unrighteous laws, and resort to civil disobedience and noncooperation and thus he constituted himself more or less as an outlaw in the eyes of the British Government in India.

The decades that followed were years of intense activity and much suffering. He was the first leading political figure in the Eastern Provinces to join forces with Gandhiji at a time when the latter was without a large and effective following. Another such leader from the West who joined Gandhiji was Vallabhbhai Patel. During the Nagpur Flag Satyagraha Rajendra Prasad and Vallabhbhai came closer. Rajendra Babu cherished Sardar's friendship as one of the most pleasant memories of his life. He often went to Sabarmati and toured the country with Gandhiji. He suffered several terms of rigorous imprisonment. He was in jail when on January 15, 1934 the devastating earthquake in Bihar occurred.

He was released two days later. Though ailing, he set himself immediately to the task of raising funds and organising relief. The Viceroy also raised a fund for the purpose. While his fund swelled to over 38 lakhs, the Viceroy's fund, despite his great influence, resources and prestige, remained at one third of the amount. The way relief was organised left nothing to be desired. Nationalist

India expressed its admiration by electing him to be the President of the Bombay session of the Indian National congress.

When the Congress Ministries were formed in 1937, it was the Parliamentary Board consisting of Sardar Patel, Rajendra Babu and Maulana Azad, which really and effectively provided guidance and control. In 1939 when Subhas Chandra Bose had to be relieved of the office of the Congress President, it was Rajendra Prasad who was persuaded to take over the presidentship and to face the crisis. The Congress faced another crisis when Acharya Kripalani resigned. Again Rajendra Babu had to step into the breach. His stewardship of the Constituent Assembly was exemplary.

His elevation to the Presidentship of the Republic in 1950 came as a matter of course. There were some doubts in some quarters.

Could a person who was temperamentally a peasant, who lived and dressed like one, impress in an office where ceremonials and gilded trappings counted? But he was a great success.

As President, he exercised his moderating influence and moulded policies or actions so silently and unobtrusively. He was an asset to Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister. It was in 1960 that he announced his intention to retire, and though there were many regrets and many tried to persuade him to continue for a third time, his mind was made up. Jayaprakash Narayan welcomed the decision, suggesting that his direct guidance might be available after retirement to the Sarvodaya Movement. But his illness, severe and protracted, shattered Rajendra Prasad's health completely. On February 28, 1963, he passed away.

Rajendra Babu shared Gandhiji's great vision, the making of a new man in a new society. His mind was capable of broad sweeps. But it would take in at the same time the smallest details.

In the name of preventing commercial discrimination against the British, it is really ensured that the Indian should be discriminated against in the future as he has been in the past. It must be the experience of all businessmen who have anything to do with the Government-and they cannot move an inch without coming across the Government in some form or another-how at every step they have to face situations which a Britisher here has

not to face. Go to the coal fields. They will tell you how it is difficult for an Indian colliery to get a railway siding to his colliery, how it is difficult for him to get wagons and how the Indian is every day discriminated against in practice. I am not mentioning how it has been possible for a few British concerns to get leases of practically the whole area with the best seams of coal and how Indians have to be content with second and third class collieries and even these they get with difficulty.

From the Presidential Address-Dr. Rajendra Prasad.

I.N.C. Session, 1934, Bombay

SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE (1897-1945)

President-Haripura, 1938; Tripuri, 1939

Subhas Chandra Bose was born on January 23, 1897 into the family of a well-to-do lawyer of Cuttack. He was destined to become one of the foremost leaders of India's freedom struggle and was to leave an indelible impress not merely on the history of modern India but on the minds and hearts of the people of Asia. Subhas passed the Matriculation examination standing second in the Calcutta University. He graduated in 1919 with a First Class in Philosophy.

In 1919, Subhas's parents decided to send him to England as they keenly desired that he should join the ICS. He appeared for the competitive examination in 1920 and came out fourth in order of merit. He also secured the Cambridge Tripos in Moral Sciences.

Subhas Babu did not, however, complete the mandatory year of probation. His mind had been deeply disturbed by grave developments at home; after the heinous Jallianwala Bagh Massacre. Subhas handed his resignation in April 1921, and returned to India.

He went to the Mahatma for guidance who, perceiving the passion for India's freedom that consumed Subhas directed him to Deshabandbu Chittaranjan Das, who had in the meantime flashed on the Indian political firmament and become the uncrowned King of Bengal. From then on for a period of four years, till C. R. Das's death in 1925, Deshabandhu was his political guru.

Subhas first proved his mettle in the thorough manner in which he worked for the total boycott of the Prince of Wales in Calcutta in 1921; subsequently his capacity for organisation and executive ability were amply demonstrated in the discharge of his duties as Chief Executive Officer of the Calcutta Corporation during the mayoralty of C. R. Das. The Government however, soon clamped him behind the bars in distant Mandalay on the trumped-up charge that he was actively associated with the terrorists of Bengal.

However, after three years of detention without trial, he was released in 1927 on medical grounds, and soon began to take an active part in political life despite his shattered health. He was elected President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee. He devoted much of his time and attention to the organisation of the youth and to the Trade Union movement as well. In 1928 the Motilal Nehru Committee appointed by the Congress, declared in favour of Dominion Status, but Subhas Babu along with Jawaharlal Nehru opposed it. Subhas also announced the formation of the Independence League. At the Calcutta Congress in 1928, presided over by Motilal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose was G.O.C. of the Congress Volunteers. The Lahore Congress Session under Jawaharlal Nehru's president-ship adopted a resolution declaring that the goal of the Congress would be complete independence or "Poorna Swaraj".

Gandhiji's Salt Satyagraha Movement (1930) again found Subhas in the thick of the fight, and the Government arrested him and lodged him in jail. When the Satyagraha was called off in March 1931 upon the conclusion of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, Subhas, who, along with others, was also set at liberty, raised his voice in protest against the Pact and the suspension of the movement, especially when patriots like Bhagat Singh and his associates had not been saved from the gallows. He soon came into conflict with the law, with the result that he was once again detained under the infamous Bengal Regulation. Within a year or so, his physical condition became so alarming that he was released, and banished from India to Europe, where he took steps to establish centres in different European capitals with a view to promoting politicocultural contacts between India and Europe.

Returning to India in 1936 in defiance of a Government ban on his entry, he was again arrested and imprisoned for a year, but soon after the General Election of 1937 and the accession of the Congress to power in seven Provinces. Subhas Babu found himself a free man again, and shortly afterwards was unanimously elected President of the Haripura Congress Session in 1938. In his Presidential address he stressed the revolutionary potentialities of the Congress Ministries formed in seven Provinces.

Contrary to the popular notion regarding Jawaharlal Nehru's role in Planning, it was Subhas Bose who, as Congress President in 1938, talked of planning in concrete terms, and set up a National Planning Committee in October that year.

The year that followed saw the steady worsening of international relations, and clouds of war gathering on the European horizon. At the end of his first term, the presidential election to the Tripuri Congress session took place early in 1939. Subhas was re-elected. defeating Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayaa who had been backed by the Mahatma. Soon after the election, the members of the Congress Working Committee resigned, and the Congress met at Tripuri under the shadow of a crisis within the Party as well as internationally.

Subhas Babu was a sick man at Tripuri, but even so, with amazing, almost prophetic foresight, he warned that an imperialist war would break out in Europe within six months, demanded that the Congress should deliver a six-months' ultimatum to Britain and in the event of its rejection a country-wide struggle for 'Poorna Swaraj' should be launched. His warning and advice, however, went unheeded, and what was worse, his powers as President were sought to be curtailed. He, therefore, resigned in April 1939, and announced, in May 1939, the formation of the Forward Bloc within the Congress. In August Subhas was removed from the Presidentship of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, and further debarred from holding any elective office in the Congress for a period of three years.

In September 1939 war broke out in Europe, and Subhas Babu's prophecy at Tripuri came true almost to the very day. India was dragged into the Imperialist War. The Congress Ministries in seven Provinces resigned in October 1939), but Mahatma Gandhi

declared that he would not like to embarrass the British Government during the war.

In March 1940 Subhas Babu convened an Anti-Compromise Conference at Ramgarh, Bihar, under the joint auspices of the Forward Bloc and the Kisan Sabha. The Conference resolved that a world-wide struggle should launched on April 6, the first day of the National Week, calling upon the people not to help the Imperialist War with men, money or materials, and to resist by all means and at all costs the exploitation of Indian resources for the preservation of Empire. The Indian people, hungry for freedom, participated in their thousands in the struggle launched throughout the country by the Forward Bloc on April 6.

Subhas Babu was arrested in July by the Bengal Government on the eve of the Anti-Holwell Monument Satyagraha in Calcutta, and sent to jail. While in prison, he resorted to hungerstrike, whereupon he was released in December 1940. A month later, on the historic 'Independence Day' January 26, 1941, an astounded India heart the news that Subhas Babu had suddenly disappeared from his house under the very nose of the C.I.D. It was not until November of that year that news trickled in from Berlin that he had gone out of India, in order, to use his own words, "to supplement from outside the struggle going on at home". In January 1942, he began his regular broadcasts from Radio Berlin, which aroused tremendous enthusiasm in India.

In the midst of the war, Subhas Babu left Germany early in 1943, and after a perilous three-month voyage in a submarine arrived in Singapore on July 2, 1943.

The dramatic appearance of the dynamic leader was a signal for wild jubilation among the Indian prisoners-of-war no less than among the civilian community in Singapore and elsewhere in East Asia. Two days later, he took over from Rash Behari Bose the leadership of the Indian Independence Movement in East Asia, organised the Azad Hind Fauj (the Indian National Army), and becoming its Supreme Commander on August 25, proclaimed the Provisional Government of Azad Hind on October 21. He was hailed as Netaji by the Army as well as by the Indian civilian population in East Asia. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands were liberated in November and renamed Shaheed and Swaraj Islands

respectively. The I.N.A. Headquarters was shifted to Rangoon in January 1944, and marching thence towards their Motherland with the war cry "Chalo Delhi!" on their lips. the Azad Hind Fauj crossed the Burma Border, and stood on Indian soil on March 18, 1944.

How the brave Army subsequently advanced up to Kohima and Imphal, how Free India's banner was hoisted aloft there to the deafening cries of "Jai Hind" and "Netaji Zindabad", how the atom bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki compelled Japan to surrender and the I.N.A. subsequently to retreat, have all become part of history.

Netaji was reportedly killed in an air crash over Taipeh, Taiwan (Formosa) on August 18, 1945. However, even Government spokesmen have confessed that there is no 'irrefutable proof' of his death in the air crash.

In the first place, we must give clear and unequivocal expression to what I have been feeling for some time past, namely, that the time has come for us to raise the issue of Swaraj and submit our national demand to the British Government in the form of an ultimatum, and give a certain time-limit within which a reply is to be expected. If no reply is received within this period or if an unsatisfactory reply is received, we should report to such sanctions as we possess in order to enforce our national demand. The sanctions that we possess today are mass Civil Disobedience or Satyagraha.

From the Presidential Address-Subhas Chandra Bose

I.N.C. Session, 1939, Tripuri

ACHARYA J B KRIPALANI (1888-1982)

President-Meerut, 1946

J. B. Kripalani was born at Hyderabad (Sind) in 1888 in an upper middle class Hindu family.

Those were days of the Bengal partition when there was a ferment among students. Kripalani also caught the spirit and raised enough trouble for the authorities of the Wilson College to be forced to migrate to the quieter atmosphere of the D.J. Sind College at Karachi. Here too he got himself involved in trouble.

When the Principal of the College made an indiscreet remark about Indians being liars. Immediately there was a strike in which Kripalani and his fellow students got their first lesson in political agitation.

From 1912 to 1917 he worked as a Professor of English and History at Muzaffarpur College in Bihar. For a short period, he taught at the Benares Hindu University (1919-20) and from 1920 to 1927 he served as the Principal of the Gujarat Vidyapeeth founded by Mahatma Gandhi. From 1927 he became fully engrossed in the Ashram work and in the political movements of the Indian National Congress. It was during his days at the Gujarat Vidyapeeth that he came to be called Acharya.

Kripalani first came into contact with Gandhiji in 1917 during the Champaran Satyagraha and that proved to be a turning point in his life. Another turning point in his life was his marriage with Sucheta in 1936. It turned out to be the happiest partnership in life. For nearly four decades there has been the closest understanding between the husband and the wife.

From the late twenties Kripalani devoted himself wholly to Congress work. He steadily built up his position in the organisation, and from 1934 to 1945 he served as the General Secretary. Content with being a silent worker, during the Congress rift in 1938 over the election of Subhas Chandra Bose as President, Kripalani sided with Gandhi. He took part in all the Congress movements since 1921. During the Quit India movement in 1942 he was arrested and was released along with the other Congress leaders in 1945. He was elected President of the Indian National Congress in November 1946 and steered the organisation through the critical days of the transfer of power.

In November 1947 he presided over a very crucial meeting of the AICC where he differed sharply from many of his former colleagues. Kripalani insisted on retaining the supremacy of the organisational wing of the Congress over the parliamentary wing, which was resisted by Nehru, Patel and others who were now in the Government. To prevent disharmony and rift within the Congress Kripalani finally tendered his resignation as President, being succeeded by Dr. Rajendra Prasad. Though he remained a member of the Constituent Assembly, Kripalani gradually drifted

away from his old comrades until he resigned from the Congress Party itself in 1951. He then started a weekly called the Vigil and a new political party known as the Krishak Mazdoor Praja Party which subsequently merged into the Praja Socialist Party. But in 1954 he resigned from the P.S.P. and became an independent for the rest of his parliamentary life. He helped the Janata Party to victory in 1977 and died soon thereafter, leaving a distinct mark on India's public life.

Kripalani has written a number of books on Gandhian philosophy. For an unarmed people to fight Great Britain at a time when all its armed might was mobilised, when the inexhaustible resources of America were at its disposal, appeared sheer folly. But then these men forgot that when the Congress under Gandhiji's lead took to revolutionary politics, it abandoned conventional political wisdom. It dared to risk and achieve. Was the Congress wise when it made the Khilafat issue, which it scarcely understood, its own? Was it again wise to resort to Salt Satyagraha to achieve independence? There was apparently no connection between salt and Independence. And what wisdom could there have been in Gandhiji walking with a flock of unarmed followers for 21 days to pick up a pinch of salt on the sea-shore? What political or any other wisdom could there be in Pandit Motilal Nehru manufacturing salt in his study in a laboratory test tube on a spirit lamp from a lamp of clay? What wisdom was there in selecting individual satyagrahis to walk from place to place shouting anti-war slogans till they were arrested? The fact is, the Congress under Gandhiji's lead has never done the conventionally obvious thing, and if it does so before the freedom fight is over and complete independence won, it will have missed its revolutionary role.

From the Presidential Address-J.B. Kripalani

I.N.C. Session, 1946, Meerut

DR PATTABHI SITARAIMAYYA (1880-1959)

President-Jaipur, 1948

Better known as the historian of the Indian National Congress Pattabhi was born on December 24, 1880 in a poor Andhra Niyogi

Brahmin family and took his M.B. & C.M. degree in 1901 from the Madras Medical College. Soon after his education Pattabhi moved to Masulipatnam and set up practice as a physician. When the partition of Bengal (1905) sent a wave of protest throughout the country, the leaders of Masulipatnam including Pattabhi strove hard to awaken the national feelings of the people through the press and by organizing lectures and Harikathas.

The youthful Pattabhi was at first inclined towards extremism and became an admirer of the 'Lal-Bal-Pal' school (i.e. of Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal). Soon he became a member of the Home Rule League of Dr. Annie Besant and ultimately became a Gandhite. Pattabhi made Masulipatnam the centre of his activities. Here he started, in 1919, an English nationalist weekly, the Janmabhumi. The Janmabhumi continued functioning till 1930. At Masulipatnam he started the Andhra Bank.

His association with the Indian National Congress goes back to his college days. In 1916 he became a member of the All India Congress committee and gave up his medical practice. Soon he was elected a member of the Congress Working Committee and continued in that position until 1948.

On the issue of Dominion Status vs Complete Independence Dr. Pattabhi, like Jawaharlal Nehru, favoured the latter. He was elected President of the Andhra Purna Swarajya Sangam. In the Calcutta session of the Congress (1928) he voted against the 'All Party Resumption' demanding Dominion Status.

On the eve of the Salt Satyagraha campaign (March 1930) Dr. Pattabhi toured the villages of the East Krishna district and spoke to the villagers about the campaign. He himself broke the Salt Law in April 1930 by leading a batch of volunteers to the sea-shore near Masulipatnam and making salt. He was arrested and sentenced to imprisonment for a year and a fine of Rs. 1,100. In October 1933, he was again arrested while picketing a shop selling foreign cloth and sentenced to six months imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 500.

Towards the close of 1938 Gandhiji nominated him for the President-ship of the Congress when there was a growing extremist wing in the Party, but he was defeated in the election. Gandhiji

took this as his defeat against Subhas Babu. When Gandhiji launched his campaign of Individual Satyagraha (1940-41), Pattabhi was chosen to participate in it. He was also arrested during the Quit-India Movement. He was released in June 1945. In December 1946 he was elected to the Constituent Assembly from Madras to work out a Constitution under the Cabinet Mission's Plan. In 1948 he was elected President of the Jaipur session of the Indian National Congress. He was the Governor of Madhya Pradesh from 1952 to 1957. He passed away on December 17,1959.

Though Pattabhi was a popular Congress leader and held in high esteem by Gandhiji, he did not hanker after office and did not take part in elections to the Provincial Assemblies or the Central Legislature. He took pleasure in working for the organisation and in writing and publishing books. His earliest publication was 'National Education' (1912), of which K. Hanumantha Rao was co-author. In the subsequent years he wrote and published 'Indian Nationalism' (1913), 'The Redistribution of Indian Provinces on a Linguistic Basis' (1916), 'Non-Cooperation' (1921), 'History of the Indian National Congress' (Vol. 1 appearing as the Golden Jubilee Volume in 1935 and Vol. 2 in 1947), and many more works.

During its long history of struggle for the attainment of India's freedom, the National Congress was naturally absorbed in this struggle and could not pay much attention to foreign affairs. Nevertheless as far as the early twenties we find the Congress passing resolutions about foreign policy. In spite of our absorption in our national struggle we always viewed it as a part of the struggle of all oppressed and colonial people. Because of this we sympathised with all other peoples in the world who might be suffering from exploitation or the domination of a foreign power. We were anti-Imperialist not only in India but in the rest of the world also. Inevitably we became anti-Fascist. Whether it was in China or Spain or Abyssinia or Czechoslovakia, the National Congress raised its voice against Imperialist and Fascist forces and Governments.

From the Presidential Address-Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya

I.N.C. Session, 1948, Jaipur.

PURSHOTTAM DAS TANDON (1882-1961)

President-Nasik, 1950

Purshottam Das Tandon was born at Allahabad on August 1, 1882, in a middle-class Khattri family. He received his early education at home, and graduated from the Muir Central College. Allahabad, in 1904, qualifying for a degree in Law and a Master's degree in History. Tandon entered the legal profession in 1906.

He joined the Indian National Congress in 1899, as a student. In 1906 he represented Allahabad at the All-India Congress Committee. He was associated with the Congress Committee, which enquired into the Jallianwalla Bagh 'massacre' (1919). He was imprisoned in 1921 for active participation in the non-cooperation movement. He was elected President of the Gorakhpur District Congress Committee in 1923 and the same year presided over the Provincial Congress Committee session. Arrested again during the Civil Disobedience Movement, Tandon became a member of the Congress Working Committee at the 1931 Karachi session.

From 1932 onwards he was arrested several times for organising peasant movements through Kisan Sabhas. In 1937-38, and again till 1948 in the reconstituted Assembly, he held the Speakership of the U.P. Legislative Assembly with great distinction. His refusal to follow the established convention of resigning from his Party on election as Speaker led to a controversy which he set at rest by undertaking to resign if any charges of partisanship were brought against him. There were none. In fact, members were all praise for his tenure. He was imprisoned for the seventh time during the 1942 movement, and upon his unconditional release on health grounds devoted himself to reorganising the Congress organisation. He was elected to the Constituent Assembly in 1946, to the Lok Sabha in 1952 and to the Rajya Sabha in 1956, but after 1956 his indifferent health forced him to retire from active public work. In 1950 he was elected President of the AICC but resigned on the eve of the 1952 General Elections on account of differences with Nehru over the constitution of the Working Committee and the relationship between the Organisational and Governmental wings of the Party.

Tandon was intimately associated with the Servants of the People Society, the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan and the Rashtrabhasha Prachar Samiti, besides editing for a long period the influential Hindi paper, the Abhyudaya From 1910 onwards, when he became the Chief Secretary of the Sammelan (he was unanimously elected its President in the Kanpur session of 1923), he strove zealously for the propagation of Hindi, Besides being an accomplished scholar of Hindi he was well-versed in Urdu and Persian. On October 3, 1960, in a public ceremony at Allahabad, the Rajarshi, as he was fondly called by Mahatma Gandhi, was presented the 'Tandon Abhinandan Granth' by Dr. Rajendra prasad, the President of India. Further recognition of his valuable services to the nation came in 1961, when the 'Bharat Ratna' was conferred. He died on July 1, 1961.

Tandon was deeply religious but, undoubtedly because of the influence of his Radhaswami faith, was free from any narrow and sectarian prejudices. He emphasised "the essential oneness of Hindu-Muslim culture, in spite of palpable differences." He attributed the Hindu-Muslim problem to the divide et impera policy of the British Government. The scheme of partitioning India was unacceptable to him, and when it fructified he expressed his disenchantment and disappointment by refraining from attending the celebrations marking India's truncated independence.

Throughout his career in the national movement, Tandon espoused the cause of the depressed classes. In a resolution moved by him at the 49th Congress Session at Lucknow in 1936, he stressed the need of making the Congress a broad-based organisation, by embracing within its fold all forces opposing British imperialism and by developing closer co-operation with the masses.

Tandon occupies a significant place in the national history of India, and can be regarded as the lineal successor of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Lala Lajpat Rai, without their social conservatism, which, perhaps, was a product of their times. In his political philosophy, Tandon represented the section of the Congress which looked up to Sardar Vallabhbhai Pate. His advocacy of the ancient Indian cultural heritage has then

responsible for the general misunderstanding of his principles and beliefs that prevails. His unflinching enthusiasm for Hindi made him the target for most unfair and all too familiar charges of linguistic chauvinism. But his speeches and writings and his genuine concern for a just place for the regional languages vindicate his position as a person with a cosmopolitan outlook and a real breadth of vision.

Under our constitution the government of our country is secular. This statement of our position became necessary in view of the fact that Pakistan which was carved out of our old body-politic after partition is avowedly communal and has based its government on the religion of Islam. The constitution of our government does not follow any particular religion. It is not dependent on any religious book. All citizens have been given equal rights irrespective of religion or caste. I consider this a proof of the wisdom and farsightedness of our county.

From the Presidential Address-Purshottam Das Tandon

I.N.C. Session, 1950, Nasik.

U N DHEBAR (1905-1977)

President-Avadi (Madras), 1955; Amritsar, 1956; Indore, 1957; Gauhati, 1958; Nagpur, 1959.

Uchharangray Navalshankar Dhebar was born on September 21, 1905 in the hamlet of Gangajala, eleven miles from Jamnagar. He belonged to the Nagar community. The family had to struggle hard against poverty. After his education, he started legal practice and from the very beginning gained a name as a lawyer; under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi he left his promising legal career in 1936 and devoted himself to national service.

In 1941 Dhebar was selected by Gandhiji to offer Individual Satyagraha at Viramgam. He was arrested and sentenced to six months' imprisonment. In 1942 he was again arrested during the Quit India Movement. On the attainment of independence, Dhebar played a prominent role in the merger of the States of Kathiawad in the Indian Union and then in the formation of the Kathiawad Union known as 'Saurashtra'. He was elected as Chief Minister of Saurashtra in 1948. During his administration several reform

were introduced in Saurashtra for the uplift of Villages. In 1955 he was elected President of the Indian National Congress. He continued in that position for five years, till 1959. His first act as the President was to assemble the top leaders of the Congress for a week in a conference to decide how best the Congress could serve the nation. In 1962 he was elected to the Lok Sabha.

Dhebar was connected with several institutions rendering social and educational services to the country.

Friends, great tasks confront us. First there is the biggest question mark of human history. What shall happen to the world we live in? There are some amongst us who think of World Peace from a subjective angle. They argue that India is interested in World Peace because without it her dreams of development will remain mere dreams. Not that this approach is unreasonable or wrong. But the Congress is not thinking of international peace only from that limited angle. Humanity today stands at cros—roads. Granted a period of peace and goodwill there is nothing that can stand in the way of universal progress and prosperity. On the other hand in the wake of war there is nothing but complete destruction of human civilisation. Never has humanity been faced with a situation so full of potentialities of unprecedented prosperity and utter annihilation. World leadership is on test and every country, big or small, has to contribute to the world pool of tolerance, understanding, wisdom and statesmanship. How can India escape the responsibility.

From the Presidential Address-U. N. Dhebar

I.N.C. Session, 1957, Indore.

NEELAM SANJEEVA REDDY (1913-1996)

President-Bangalore, 1960; Bhavnagar, 1961; Patna, 1962.

Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy, one of the foremost political leaders from Andhra Pradesh, was born on May 19, 1913 in the Anantapur district. He came from a respectable and well-to-do family. He had his early education at Adyar, Madras and then at the Arts College at Anantapur. While still in college he gave up his studies to participate in the freedom struggle launched by Mahatma Gandhi. He first took part in the Civil Disobedience Movement

in 1931. Within a few years he came into prominence as an influential peasant leader. He participated in various struggles against the British and was imprisoned several times. Sanjeeva Reddy took an active part in the Quit India Movement. In 1946 Sanjeeva Reddy was elected to the Madras Legislative Assembly and later on he became the Secretary of the Congress Legislature Party in Madras. He was also elected to the Constituent Assembly in India.

Sanjeeva Reddy held various important positions in the Congress and became a member of the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee. He was in the Congress Working Committee and of the Central Parliamentary Board. He was elected to the Rajya Sabha in 1952 and served as a member for a little over a year. When the Andhra Province was separated from Madras and T. Prakasam became the Chief Minister of Andhra, Sanjeeva Reddy was appointed Deputy Chief Minister. When the new Andhra Pradesh was constituted Sanjeeva Reddy became its first Chief Minister and served in that capacity from November 1956 to December 1959. In December 1959 he was elected President of the Indian National Congress and he continued in that office till May 1962. He again became the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh in 1962 for one year. Later he was appointed to the Central Cabinet.

Sanjeeva was speaker of the Lok Sabha from 1967 to 1969. He then contested for the office of the President as the official Congress candidate as against V. V. Giri who was then the Vice-President. The Presidential contest proved to be of momentous significance in the history of the Congress, resulting in the split of the Congress with an overwhelming section siding with Mrs. Indira Gandhi, who had rebelled against the old guard, headed by Mr. Nijalingappa, which came to be known as the Congress (O). Thus the Congress came to be divided into the Congress (O) and Congress (R) parties. The President election went in favour of Mr. V. V. Giri.

The, split in the Congress gradually widened. In the 1971 mid-term election, the Congress (R) had a landslide victory and the Congress (O) was reduced to a party of little significance. After the defeat of the Congress (R) in the Lok Sabha elections of 1977, Sanjeeva Reddy was elected at the instance of the Janata Party as

the President of the Republic. In 1981 he retired. The Congress has not only to discharge the governmental functions but has also other responsibilities. There is plenty of constructive and nation-building work which Congressmen have to attend to apart from the dissemination of Congress ideology. The Congress ideology has been built up through the eventful decades of our recent history and contain the best answer to all the challenges of democracy. If this ideology is not effectively propagated wrong ideas and wrong approaches will take its place exposing the country as also out infant democracy to new dangers. Among the steps we should take to restorate an effective measures of discipline in the Congress is the incalculation in Congressmen of a fresh sense of mission so that the practical tasks that await them are tackled with vigour. The coming elections also enforce the need to close up our ranks so that the people are able to concentrate on what we stand for, on our objectives and are not diverted by our petty internal differences.

From the Presidential Address-N. Sanjeeva Reddy

I.N.C. Session, 1961, Bhavnagar.

K KAMARAJ (1903-1975)

President-Bhubaneswar, 1964; Durgapur, 1965; Jaipur, 1966

Kumaraswami Kamaraj played a leading role in shaping India's destiny from the passing away of Jawaharlal Nehru to the Congress split in 1969. He was born humble and poor in a backward area of Tamilnadu on July 15, 1903. He was a Nadar, one of the most depressed castes of Hindu society. His schooling lasted only six years. At twelve he was a shop assistant. He was barely fifteen when he heard of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre which was the turning point in his life. Two years later when Kamaraj saw Gandhiji at Madurai the path was chosen. He became a member of the Indian National Congress.

Kamaraj was content for years to remain a rank and file Congress volunteer, working hard for the cause of the freedom movement, unmindful of his personal comfort or career. He was eighteen when he responded to the call of Gandhiji for non-cooperation with the British. He carried on propaganda in the

villages, raised funds for Congress work and took a leading part in organising meetings S. At twenty he was picked up by Satyamurthy, one of the greatest orators and a leading figure of the Tamilnadu Congress Committee who was to be Kamaraj's political guru. In April 1930, Kamaraj joined the Salt Satyagraha Movement at Vedaranyam and was sentenced to two years his first term in prison. Jail-going had become a part of his career and in all he went to prison six times and spent more than 3,000 days in British Jails. Bachelor Kamaraj was forty-four when India became free.

Kamaraj was elected President of the Tamilnad Congress Committee in February 1940. He held that post till 1954. He was in the Working Committee of the AICC from 1947 till the Congress split in 1969, either as a member or as a special invitee. Kamaraj was elected to the Madras Legislative Assembly in 1937 unopposed. He was again elected to it in 1946. He was also elected to the Constituent Assembly of India in 1946, and later to Parliament in 1952. He became Chief Minister of Madras in 1954. He was perhaps the first non-English knowing Chief Minister in India. But it was during the nine years of his administration that Tamilnadu came to be known as one of the best administered States in India. In 1963 he suggested to Nehru that senior Congress leaders should leave ministerial posts to take up organisational work. This suggestion came to be known as the 'Kamaraj Plan', which was designed primarily to dispel from the minds of Congressmen the lure for power, creating in its place a dedicated attachment to the objectives and policies of the organisation. The plan was approved by the Congress Working Committee and was implemented within two months. Six Chief Ministers and six Union Ministers resigned under the Plan. Kamaraj was elected President, Indian National Congress, on October 9, 1963. Twice he played a leading role in choosing the Prime Minister of India.

His defeat in Virudhunagar in 1967 considerably undermined his prestige. It was even said that he was a much disillusioned man. But the landslide victory at Nagercoil revived his political stature. However, the split in the Congress in 1969 (he remained in the Organisation Congress) and the General Elections of 1971 resulted in a set-back to his political prestige and authority. He

continued to work quietly among the masses until the last. He was honoured posthumously by the award of Bharat Ratna.

Even during the days of the freedom struggle, the Congress organisation had broadly indicated that the society which it envisaged after achieving independence was not the conventional type of society but a progressive one based on the modern concepts of social, political and economic equality and justice. The Indian National Congress, until Mahatma Gandhi assumed its leadership was confining its attention to political freedom. Mahatmaji not only spread the message of freedom to the farthest corners of India, but also devoted his attention to the eradication of poverty and misery among the masses. When the masses realised that the Indian National Congress stood for the betterment of their economic condition and their social progress, they joined the organisation in large numbers and gave them massive support.

From the Presidential Address-K. Kamaraj

I.N.C. Session, 1964, Bhubaneswar.

S NIJALINGAPPA (1902-)

President-Hyderabad, 1968; Faridabad, 1969

Siddavanalli Nijalingappa was born on December 10, 1902 in a middle-class Hindu Lingayat family in a small village in the Bellary district, Mysore State.

He graduated from the Central College, Bangalore, in 1924, and got his Law degree from the Law College, Poona, in 1926. As a child, he was given traditional education by an old type of teacher named Veerappa Master. Thus, like the other heroes of the Indian Freedom Movement, Nijalingappa had also a unique blend of both traditional and modern education. The life and the vachanas of Basaveshwar and the philosophy of Shankaracharya, as well as the course of the Indian Freedom Movement and the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi had the utmost effect on his mind.

Nijalingappa's political career started late, i.e. in 1936. He used to attend the Congress sessions as a spectator. It was in 1936, when Nijalingappa came into contact with Dr. N. S. Hardikar, that he began to take an active interest in the organization. He served it first as a volunteer, rising to be the President of the Pradesh

Congress Committee and finally the President of the All India Congress Committee in 1968.

Parallel to India's Freedom Movement was the movement for the unification of Karnataka. The services rendered by Nijalingappa towards the latter was unique, and in recognition of the same, he was chosen as its first Chief Minister. Then again for the second time, he was elected to the same responsible post and he continued in that post up to April 1968. He may well be called the maker of modern Karnataka. He became the Congress President when people in many parts of the country had expressed their distrust in it in the 1967 elections. Due to the untiring efforts of Nijalingappa, the Congress Party was re-invigorated. But perhaps the greatest tragic event in the history of the Indian National Congress occurred during his Presidentship. Due to the unfortunate cleavage which developed between the organisation front and the administration wing, the Congress Party was split, with Nijalingappa siding with vested interests as against the progressive ones led by Mrs. Indira Gandhi.

The Official Language of the Union has always presented a difficult and complex problem. It was after a good deal of discussion and consideration, that the late Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru evolved a consensus in the matter and gave a categorical assurance to the non-Hindi people that they would not be put under a handicap in adopting Hindi as the official language.

From the Presidential Address-S. Nijalingappa

I.N.C. Session, 1968, Hyderabad

JAGJIVAN RAM (1908-1986)

President-Bombay, 1969

Jagjivan Ram was born in Bihar in 1908 into a family which could not claim the privileges of the upper caste families. In spite of the odds against him he passed his matriculation in the first division and joined the Benaras Hindu University where he was awarded the Birla scholarship. He passed his B.Sc. from Calcutta University in 1931.

To have got himself educated despite social and economic disabilities and chronic poverty gave him a unique position in the

prevailing political situation in the country. His first-hand knowledge of the social and economic situation in the country made him a much sought after person both by the nationalists and the men who ruled in the provinces on behalf of the British Government. The nationalists were anxious to have him in order to counter Ambedkar, an outspoken champion of the scheduled castes who talked of separate electorates and Harijans leaving the Hindu faith.

When a measure of popular rule was introduced under the 1935 Act and the scheduled castes were given representation in the legislatures, Jagjivan Ram found himself nominated to the Bihar Council. Although he could have found for himself a berth even among loyalists, he chose to go with the nationalists and resigned his membership on the issue of irrigation cess. In 1937 he was elected to the assembly. The 1940 Satyagraha and the Quit India Movement found in him an active participant. He was inducted into the interim Government at the Centre in 1946.

Jagjivan Ram had arrived on the political scene as the representative of the scheduled castes and the Congress leadership looked to him as an able spokesman of the depressed classes. He was a dutiful Congressman who sought to translate into action the programmes of the party. With a characteristic combination of shrewdness and adaptability he made his political career a conspicuous success.

In the great split in the Congress Party in 1969, Jagjivan Ram found himself in the camp led by Mrs. Indira Gandhi. He not only became the president of the divided Congress led by Mrs. Gandhi, but also gained a virtual No. 2 ranking in the cabinet when appointed Defence Minister in 1970.

In 1977 he left the Congress party to join hands with the Janata opposition. In the new ministry formed with Morarji Desai as the Prime Minister, he was once again given the Defence portfolio. The Congress (I) came back to power in 1980. Disillusioned with the Janata party he formed his own party, the Congress (J). Jagjivan Babu continues to be a member of Parliament.

As a matter of fact, post-independence Congress, in the form in which it existed even in 1948, had, according to Gandhiji,

outlived its utility as a propaganda vehicle. He had, therefore, urged the initiation of popular activity on a different plane based on the concept of 'peoples committees' The cataclysmic events which followed this prognosis made a complete break with the past and the building anew from below humanly impossible. The organisation, therefore, continued in the form in which it had existed in the pre-independence era. The administrative apparatus was also left unchanged. The old procedures continued to hold the field. All this certainly made for smooth transition and continuity but it smothered that soaring spirit of freedom which political independence had given rise to.

This session fulfils, in a way, Gandhiji's wish, not fully, but partially, not in form, but in spirit. It heralds the beginning of a new historic epoch in the Congress.

From the Presidential Address-Jagjivan Ram

I.N.C. Session, 1969, Bombay. Template

DR SHANKAR DAYAL SHARMA (1918-)

President-Calcutta, 1972

Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, like many Madhya Pradesh politicians, moved to the former princely state of Bhopal from Uttar Pradesh during the state people's movement against feudal tyranny. He combined his love for study with sports and politics from his student days in Allahabad. A good athlete, a cross-country runner and a champion swimmer, he flirted with journalism in his student days and jumped into politics during the hectic days of the Quit India movement. He combined teaching with politics. For nine years he taught law in the Lucknow University before he became Chief Minister of Bhopal.

He was affable, amiable and a good conversationalist. An opportunist, Dr. Sharma joined hands with Indira Gandhi during the critical days of the split. As Chief Minister of Bhopal his first measure was to abolish all jagirdaris at one stroke. As Education Minister he had made education free for Harijans, Adivasis and other backward classes as well as for girls. The teacher in him has always remained dominant. He was leader of the Indian delegation at UNESCO's conference on primary and secondary education

held at Karachi in 1959. For thirteen years he was a member of the Central Advisory Board for Education.

As the person in charge of the parliamentary wing of the AICC, Dr. Sharma had to execute, some very delicate assignments involving changes in State Governments in some of the difficult Congress States. In 1972 he was re-elected Congress President, unopposed, for a full two-year term. His presidentship of the Congress witnessed the emergence of a revitalised party and the office of the Congress President regained some of its lost importance. He also served the Congress as Chairman of the All India Advisory Board of Congress Seva Dal.

He was absorbed into the Union Cabinet in 1975 as Communication Minister. He was defeated in the 1977 Lok Sabha elections; but came back to Parliament in 1980 and held many important non-official positions, both in the Congress and outside. He was appointed the Governor of Andhra Pradesh in 1984 but after the recent elections in the Punjab, in the wake of the Longowal-Rajiv Accord between the Prime Minister and the Akali Dal President, who was later assassinated, Dr. Sharma was transferred as the Governor of Punjab.

We must not forget that the Garibi Hatao movement on which the nation is launched today under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi is not merely an Indian phenomenon. India has really given a concrete shape and form to the deep urges which have been moving the newly free, developing countries.

A large number of these countries have drawn their lesson from India's method of planned development to build a new society based on equity and justice which necessarily means avoiding a path in which production by the entire society is appropriated by a few and the economy operates to the detriment of the many and for the benefit of a handful. The Congress is following this path in no spirit of rancour or hostility to any group or class but, with the sole purpose of uplifting our vast, long suffering masses from the depths of poverty and starvation.

From the Presidential Address-Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma

I.N.C. Session, 1972, Calcutta.

DEV KANTA BOROOAH (1914-1997)

President-Chandigarh, 1975

Dev Kanta Borooah, President of the Congress in 1974, was born on February 22, 1914 at Dibrugarh (Assam). He was a voracious reader of writers like Wordsworth, Lawrence, Tagore, Chandidas and a poet in his own right. His publications include the book Sagar Dekhisa. But his pre-occupation with thought and emotion did not come in the way of action.

He schooled at Gauhati and Nowgong and graduated from the Benares Hindu University. Soon after he was absorbed into the freedom struggle and underwent improsionment in 1930,1941 and 1942. He wielded the pen as editor of Dainik Assamiya and Natun Assamiya and played an important role in moulding public opinion.

His political career began as a member of the Constituent Assembly in 1949-51. He was also a member of the Provisional Parliament and elected to the Lok Sabha in 1952-57, 1977-79. In 1957 he was elected to the Assam Legislative Assembly. He became the Speaker in 1962 and subsequently the Minister for Education and Co-operation. He resigned from the assembly in 1966 and was re-elected to the assembly in 1967. His chequered career included a stint as Chairman, Oil India Limited, as Governor of Bihar, and as member of the Rajya Sabha (1973-77). During 1973-74 he was Minister of Petroleum and Chemicals. The mantle of the President of the Indian National Congress fell on him in 1975.

Borooah continued to be the President, all through the years of the Emergency, when he hailed Indira Gandhi as "Indira is India" and "India is Indira" and was in charge of the general elections in 1977, when the Congress candidates were defeated in most places, bringing the Janata Party to power.

Behind the past quarter of a century's struggle for India's independence and all our conflicts with the British authority lay in my mind, and that of many others, the desire to revitalise India. We felt that through action and self-imposed sufferings and sacrifice, through voluntarily facing risk and danger, through refusal to submit to what are considered evil and wrong, would we recharge the battery of India's spirit and awaken her from her

long slumber. Though we came into conflict continually with the British Government in India, our eyes were always turned towards our own people. Political advantage had value only in so far as it helped in that fundamental purpose of ours. Because of this governing motive, frequently we acted as no politician, moving in the narrow sphere of politics only, would have done, and foreign and Indian critics expressed surprise at the folly and intransigence of our ways. Whether we were foolish or not, the historians of the future will judge. We aimed high and looked far.

From the Presidential Address-D. K. Borooah

I.N.C. Session, 1975, Chandigarh

INDIRA GANDHI (1917-1984)

President-1959 New Delhi, 1978; Calcutta, 1983

Indira Gandhi saw herself as a latter-day Joan of Arc-such was her ardour and faith in herself as a patriot. Like the French she too died as a martyr-as a martyr for the unity of her country. She had said before her barbarous murder: "Every drop of my blood will contribute to the growth of this nation and make it strong and dynamic."

She was a woman of courage and herself admired people with the fighting spirit, people who triumphed over handicaps. For instance Helen Keller and Douglas Bader. In her childhood her father was a source of inspiration to her. We all remember the letters that he wrote to her, wrote to Indira Priyadarshini, from goal; these were to form the "Glimpses of World History".

Anand Bhawan, Allahabad, was next only to Gandhiji's ashram as the headquarters of the freedom struggle. Here she came into contact with the great men and women of the time. Indeed she was brought up on a diet of freedom. When she was only 12 she organised her own "army" to liberate the country: it was called the Vanar Sena. Her real education was in the school of political life but of course she had her former schooling at Poona, Santiniketan and in Europe. She married Feroze Gandhi in 1942. Their honeymoon, one might say, was the Quit India movement.

Her real political apprenticeship was under her father after he had become Prime Minister. Her election as President of the

Congress in 1959 marked her entry into politics as an all-India figure. On her father's death she was drafted into the Union cabinet by Lal Bahadur Shastri as a reluctant minister for Information and Broadcasting. Shastri died in January 1966 and she became his successor. Her prime ministership was stormy and embattled. First came the confrontation with the so-called Syndicate in the party which led to a split in the Congress in 1969. This was followed not before long with the crisis created by the massive inflow of refugees from East Bengal. We need not recount the developments of this time which led to the Bengladesh war in which she had to defy the might of a superpower like America.

The Navnirman movement in Gujarat and Jayaprakash Narayan's call for a "total revolution" caused tension all over the North and led to the declaration of internal emergency in 1975. After the emergency was lifted the Janata came to power and she had to face much harassment and even imprisonment for a short while. In 1978 there was another split in the Congress but she commanded a majority and her group came to be called the Congress (I).

In 1980 she was swept back into power. But her troubles were not over. Tle Congress (I) lost Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka and there was trouble in a number of states like Jammu and Kashmir, Assam and Punjab. The rise of regionalism in Punjab with the Sikhs spearheading a secessionist movement proved a challenge to her leadership. She was compelled to order "Operation Bluestar" but there was no considerable abatement of Sikh terrorism. On October 31, 1984, her own Sikh bodyguards brutally sprayed her with bullets and the life of a courageous lady of burning patriotism was extinguished.

"The Congress has had a small beginning but over the years as a result of its policies and programmes it has grown into a mighty organisation. It has also changed with the demands of the time. Gurudev Tagore's poem Ekla chalo has always inspired me. Gandhiji showed us that sometimes we may have to walk alone in the pursuit of our principles and in order to fight inequality and injustice. Our aim must always be to refurbish India's image and take our people forward on the right path which aims at the uplift of the poor and downtrodden."

From the Presidential Address of Indira Gandhi to the 76th Session of the Congress held on January 1978, in New Delhi.

RAJIV GANDHI (1944-1991)

Sixth Prime Minister (1984-1989) of India, the Third Member of his Family to Attain that Post

Rajiv Gandhi, grandson of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru entered public life in February 1983 after the tragic death of his brother Sanjay Gandhi and became the youngest Prime Minister of India following yet another tragedy after the death of his mother Indira Gandhi in 1984. He was also, perhaps one of the youngest elected heads of the Governments in the democratic world.

Besides being the harbinger of a generational change in the country, Mr. Gandhi received the biggest mandate in the nation's history in the elections to the Lok Sabha in the year 1984.

Rajiv Gandhi's analytical abilities, inquiring mind freshness and vigour of approach, optimism and objectivity enabled him to get to the root of a crisis and find ways for solving some of our most tangled problems.

Science and Technology were, for Rajiv Gandhi, the keys to the future of India. The emphasis which Rajiv laid on responsive administration was very characteristic of him. Rajiv Gandhi's concern for the weak and disabled was deep and abiding.

It was during Rajiv Gandhi's tenure as Prime Minister that concrete steps were taken to draw the youth more closely into nation building activities. His Prime Ministership saw a tremendous growth in India's stature in International affairs. Rajiv Gandhi had great faith in the people of India and the future.

Rajiv Gandhi was President of the Indian National Congress, Bombay (1985), when the party celebrated its Centenary.

A bold, courageous and dynamic leader Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated at Sri Perambadur, Tamilnadu in 1991 when he was busy campaigning for the Congress in Lok Sabha Elections as Party President.

"As we build today so will be the tomorrow. Together we will build for an India of the twenty-first century. Together we will

transform what needs transformation. Together we will face challenges and obstacles to progress. Together we will create an India that is strong, wise and great-a flame of peace and tolerance"

From the Broadcast to the Nation on 12th November 1984

P. V. NARASIMHA RAO PRESIDENT-1992 TIRUPATI

A leader from Andhra Pradesh P. V. Narasimha Roa is associated with Congress for the past five decades. As a student leader he had organised Satyagrahas against the British in many parts of Andhra and courted arrests. A science and law student of Osmania University P. V. Narasimha Rao can write and speak in many Indian and foreign languages. He was the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh between 1971 and 1973. He was Union Cabinet Minister during 1984-95.

P. V. Naramsimha Rao was Prime Minister for a full term between 1991-96. He presided over the Indian National Congress Session at Tirupati in 1992.

SITARAM KESRI (1919-1999)

President-1997 Calcutta

Sitaram Kesri was hardly a boy of 13 when he jumped into the national freedom movement in Bihar. As a Youth Leader he was a great organiser of non-cooperation movements and Satyagrahas in his home State of Bihar. he was arrested by British many times during 1930, 1932 and 1933.

Sitaram Kesri, who was associated with Congress for over six decades was Treasurer of the party for many years. Served as Union Cabinet Minister in charge of many portfolios he presided over the Indian National Congress Session at Calcutta in 1997.

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